

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

## Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

---

Bachelor of Divinity

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

---

4-15-1941

### A Critical Analysis of the Harmony of the Passion Story

Robert Gussick

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, [ir\\_gussickr@csl.edu](mailto:ir_gussickr@csl.edu)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv>



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Gussick, Robert, "A Critical Analysis of the Harmony of the Passion Story" (1941). *Bachelor of Divinity*. 41.  
<https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv/41>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bachelor of Divinity by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact [seitzw@csl.edu](mailto:seitzw@csl.edu).

A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE HARMONY OF THE  
PASSION STORY

A Thesis presented to the  
Faculty of Concordia Theological Seminary  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Divinity  
by  
Robert Francis Gussick

Concordia Seminary,  
April 15, 1941

Approved by:

---

---



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### PART I

#### INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL

CHAPTER I	1
ON THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE GOSPELS	
CHAPTER II	7
ON THE HISTORICITY OF THE GOSPELS	
CHAPTER III	15
ON THE DATE OF THE PASSION HISTORY	

### PART II

#### A HARMONY OF THE PASSION STORY

CHAPTER I	32
IN THE GARDEN	
CHAPTER II	44
BEFORE THE JEWISH COURTS	
CHAPTER III	63
BEFORE THE ROMAN COURTS	
CHAPTER IV	83
ON THE CROSS OF CALVARY	



## INTRODUCTION

In these pages we have attempted to show that the four gospels present a harmonious account of the Passion of Jesus Christ. In order to facilitate the work we have divided this thesis into two parts.

In the first part we prepare the ground. In a sketchy manner we first establish the authenticity of the four gospels by demonstrating that they measure up to legal standards as evidence. Secondly, we take up the documentary hypotheses, applying the principles of the Bible critic to the modern newspaper with its ludicrous results. In the final chapter of this introductory material we discuss the time of the Passion story, debating whether the Synoptists and the fourth gospel are at variance or in agreement and whether Jesus was crucified on the fourteenth or fifteenth of Nisan.

In the second part the Passion story itself is the subject. We have endeavored to relate the events of Jesus' suffering and death, beginning with the incidents in the Garden of Gethsemane and terminating on the Saturday evening before Easter Sunday. The method we have employed is simply to tell the story of this period of the Savior's life. We have relegated most of the critical comment to the foot notes, so as not to clutter the body of the material with pedantic argumentation. Though on the surface the detail work behind the harmonizing of the four accounts may not always be apparent, it was only after mature consideration that certain courses were followed.

With this in mind we offer our critical harmony of the Passion story.



DEDICATED TO  
MY MOTHER AND FATHER

AND

RUTH MARIE

but for whose loving care during  
the long months of my illness  
this thesis might never  
have been written.



## IN THE AGONY OF THE DEATH

In the first century writings of the Latin Middle Ages we find the only consistently references to the death of Jesus Christ in pagan history. There in the *Agony* history we find the tradition that Jesus, who, because of the power of his resurrection, turned the early Christians with the burden of Jesus, whose popular tradition pointed to him as the author of the resurrection, and thus the Christians became the target of a series of bloody persecutions at the hands of this cruel and unprincipled Emperor.

### PART I

#### INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL

This passage in Tacitus reads: "In order, if possible, to remove the legislation, he [Emperor] determined to transfer the guilt to others. For this purpose he permitted, with exquisite torture, a race of men branded for their evil practices, by vulgar superstition commonly called Christians. The name was derived from Christ, who in the reign of Tiberius, suffered under Pontius Pilate, the procurator of Judaea." <sup>1)</sup> Then there are words, not only these, the death of Jesus Christ is mentioned in pagan history. <sup>2)</sup> All the additional information on the

1) Tacitus, *Annals*, IV, 10, 11.

2) The reference in Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, XVIII, 113, 3, undoubtedly containing some interpolations, we would not class as *pagan history*. In *Antiquities of the Jews*, "Chronicle," 113, 3, there is no reference to the death of Jesus Christ, but merely a mention of a man named "Christus," which seems to be a form of



## I.

### ON THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE GOSPELS

In the first century writings of the Latin historian Tacitus we find the only contemporary reference to the death of Jesus Christ in pagan history. There in the Annales Tacitus uncovers the treacherous plot of Nero, who, because of the press of circumstances, blamed the early Christians with the burning of Rome, since popular suspicion pointed to him as the author of the conflagration. And thus the Christians became the target of a series of bloody persecutions at the behest of this cruel and unprincipled Emperor.

This passage in Tacitus reads: "In order, if possible, to remove the imputation, he [Nero] determined to transfer the guilt to others. For this purpose he punished, with exquisite torture, a race of men detested for their evil practices, by vulgar appellation commonly called Christians. The name was derived from Christ, who in the reign of Tiberius, suffered under Pontius Pilate, the procurator of Judaea." 1)  
With those few words, and only those, the death of Jesus Christ is authenticated in pagan history. 2) All the additional information on the

---

1) Tacitus, Annales, XV, xxxiv

2) The reference in Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, XVIII, iii, 3, undoubtedly containing some interpolations, we would not class as pagan history. In Suetonius, The Lives of the Caesars, "Claudius," XXV, iv, there is no reference to the death of Jesus Christ, but merely a mentioning of a man named "Chrestos," which seems to be a form of



Passion of Jesus Christ, extant today, is found in Christian writings, especially in the four gospels.

Men of all ages have lined up on either side of the fence, either against or for the Christ of the Christians. Today is no exception. Men cast aside the Christ of the gospels for the Christ of pagan history and thus make nothing more of Jesus of Nazareth than a poor martyr for a lost cause. Their voices are heard, ringing in clarion tones, "Give us the facts of pagan history, throw out the fiction of gospel tradition!" Hence it is not strange to find men of our times expressing themselves in strong terms, such as these, "Tacitus tells us all that is to be known so far as historical facts are concerned." <sup>3)</sup> And some even go so far as to deny this thread of historicity in Tacitus. "It seems impossible for any unbiassed critic to doubt that this passage represents an interpolation, a forged addition to the text, inserted long after the days of Tacitus by some monk or Christian copyist. It is formulated in closest accordance with the Christian tradition that gradually had become established." <sup>4)</sup>

For us the question must therefore be answered, Is the story of Jesus Christ's suffering and death, as found in the four gospels, authentic? If we must come to a negative answer, our knowledge of the Passion of Jesus is very meager indeed. If the gospels fall as history, the Passion of Christ ceases to be a fact. We could only be sure of His death! And of what man cannot that be said that he died? It is only from the four gospels that the motive behind the death of Jesus Christ and

---

"Christos" due to iotacism.

3) Moore, Addison, A New Attitude Toward Jesus, p. 3.



the details surrounding this incident are narrated by contemporaneous writers.

In order to ascertain the correct answer to our question we shall pursue a course, which may seem a bit strange for the moment, but, after a sober second thought, should prove conclusive. We will take the four gospels to court and see what modern law has to say concerning the authenticity of documents presented as evidence. If these early writings stand in the eyes of the law -- and how many of us have not experienced in some way or another the intricate system of legal procedure that has been built up through the years? -- they must certainly stand as history, until sufficient evidence is provided to the contrary!

We find that when testimonial or circumstantial evidence is not available for a document, produced in court as evidence, there are four kinds of circumstances, which will suffice to admit the document prima facie. These are Age, Contents, Custody, and Seal.

"Age. When a document is so old that there would usually be no available witnesses to its execution or to its handwriting, a necessity arises for being satisfied with other evidence. The circumstances that will thus suffice (as defined by a rule of thumb of long standing) are these:

Age. The document must be shown to have been in existence for thirty years, i. e., a generation. . . .

Custody. The document must come from a place where it might naturally be found, if genuine.

Appearance. The document must bear the appearances of genuineness. . .



"Contents. When a document, usually a letter, mentions matters which could have been known only to the person purporting to have written it, this is strong evidence of its genuineness. . .

"Custody. The presence of a document in official custody, in the natural place where a document of the particular sort would be found, is sufficient evidence of its genuineness to admit it. The witness producing it must of course testify to the circumstances. . .

"Official Signatures. At common law the assumption of a seal's genuineness included the signature, if any; but no purporting official signature, lacking seal, was assumed genuine. But for the usual routine of official certified copies and the like there is little risk of forgery. Accordingly by modern English and Canadian statutes virtually every official certified copy of certificate is made admissible by its purporting appearance without other evidence authenticating signature or seal. A similar measure could well be adopted in the United States." 5)

When the four gospels are gaged by these "rules of thumb," we see that they are admissible as substantiated evidence. That they are more than a generation old is common knowledge. Many a home contains a family Bible which can boast a century or more of existence. The ancient manuscripts of the four gospels go back to the fourth century of our era, and some fragments even to the second century.

They have been in the custody of the Christian Church since the earliest times. In the second century they are mentioned by such

---

5) Wigmore, John H., A Students' Textbook of the Law of Evidence, Sections 320 - 327, pp. 327 - 336.



Christian writers as Papias, Bishop of Hierapolis; Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch; Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna; Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons; and Theophilus, Bishop of Antioch. In the second half of this same century a learned Christian of Assyria, Tatian by name, compiled a harmony of the four gospels, called the Diatessaron. Had these gospels not been in existence by then or had they not been held in high esteem by the early Fathers, such a compilation, which is definitely based on the identical four gospels, known to us, would have been an utter impossibility. And thus through all the succeeding years, even to the present, these four gospels have never left the protective shrine of the Church.

In regard to contents who could have known more about the life and times of Jesus Christ than the very disciples who knew Him personally or were associates of those in the inner circle? St. Matthew was one of the twelve, St. Mark was a companion of St. Peter, St. Luke was a partner of St. Paul and a figure well known by the first Christians, and St. John was the "beloved disciple" of the Lord. Is there anything in their writings that would lead us to disbelieve this? Are there anachronisms? Are there historical discrepancies? Does the culture, described by them, fit any other period but the first century Anno Domini? Many would say, "Yes!" But what is behind that broad positive assurance -- evidence? Where? Or is it not rather subjective criticism, based on personal bigotry? Let them bring forth their evidence!

That the gospels are appended with the official seal and signature of each of the writers no one is foolish enough to claim. We do not have in our possession today the original manuscripts of the four gospels. But that these writings have had the same titles practically



since their inception Church historians of those early times imply. Never has there been any fear within the Church that forgers had duped the early Christians into believing that the four whose names appear over the four gospels were not the real authors. They were accepted unanimously as authentic until the eighteenth century when outbursts of rationalism in various parts of Europe tried to sweep them from their coveted position. But this attempt, though still rampant today, has been to no avail. We have many gospels which are not genuine, some in fragmentary form, others in their entirety. But we heartily agree with Dean Farrar, who wrote, "We still possess a rich collection of Apocryphal Gospels, and, if they serve no other purpose, they have this value, that they prove for us undoubtedly the unique and transcendent superiority of the sacred records." <sup>6)</sup> A cursory reading of these forged documents will clinch that assertion.

Does this evidence, though only produced in a sketchy manner, prove our contention? The four gospels have offered their testimony, based entirely on fact. This must be accepted until facts showing our statements erroneous are produced. From Greenleaf on Evidence we quote: "When documents purporting to come from antiquity, and bearing upon their face no evident marks of forgery, are found in the proper repository, the law considers such documents to be authentic and genuine, and the burden of proof to the contrary devolves upon the objector." <sup>7)</sup>

Until such evidence is forthcoming we accept the four gospels as authoritative writings, which contain the true history of Jesus Christ. That is the only honest, unbiased verdict that can be reached.

---

6) Farrar, F.W., The Messages of the Books, p. 27.

7) Quoted from Rimmer, Harry, The New Testament and the Laws of Evidence, p. 19, italics being our own.



## II.

### ON THE HISTORICITY OF THE GOSPELS

The fact, however, that we have shown that the four gospels are accepted history does not solve our entire problem, for we have not completely answered our question, as to whether the history of the suffering and death of Jesus Christ is authentic. Since the eighteenth century men have echoed and re-echoed the skepticism of Thomas Paine, "The four books already mentioned -- Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John -- are altogether anecdotal. They relate events after they had taken place. They tell what Jesus Christ did and said, and what others did and said to him; and in several instances they relate the same event differently. Revelation is necessarily out of the question with respect to those books; not only because of the disagreement of the writers, but because revelation cannot be applied to the relating of facts by the persons who saw them done, nor to the relating or recording of any discourse or conversation by those who heard it." <sup>1)</sup>

Today, though the rationalism of Paine still thrives in our midst, it has become more subtle. People for the most part do not entirely deny the historicity of the gospels, but they employ the so-called critical method of interpreting them, which in the final analysis is the same thing, coming, however, as a wolf in sheep's clothing. This modern criticism has been defined by a scholar of our generation thus: "Every statement of fact in an ancient author is a problem, and has to

---

1) Paine, Thomas, The Age of Reason, p. 19. Italics are supplied.



be accounted for. If it accords with the context, and the entire body of statement agrees with the best scheme we can form in our mind's eye of the epoch, we accept it, just as we would the statement of a witness standing before us in a law court." <sup>2)</sup> This statement taken by itself is very acceptable. It is the common sense rule which we used in the first chapter of this treatise. However, when we examine the works of these very critics, we find that their entire emphasis is on the "we" half of the definition. They formulate the pattern, and then they weave the gospels into a gorgeous tapestry, choosing carefully each thread and discarding all that does not fit into their plan. In the end we find nothing but a naked subjectivism, devoid of all foundation, resting on the individual's whims and caprices! Is that scholarship?

In order that we might bring their theory into the light of better understanding, we shall apply it to an everyday item, the daily newspaper. Practically every large city in the United States has more than one daily newspaper. When something of interest or importance occurs, it is printed in these papers. We read these parallel accounts and never stop to think that, in a way, we have a similar situation in the four gospels. St. Matthew, St. Mark, and St. Luke, the so-called Synop-  
tists, we might call news reporters, who wrote brief biographies a short time after the death of Jesus Christ. Each had his own viewpoint, even as each newscaster today, when reporting the day's events. St. John might well be looked upon as an editor, who, at the end of the first century of Christianity, wrote his editorial on the life of Jesus Christ, the author and founder of this new religion. In no editorial do we look

---

2) Conybeare, Fred C., The Historical Christ, pp. 7. 8. Italics added.



for the same enumeration of facts, as we do on the news page. Nor should we be surprised to find that in St. John's gospel many things are taken for granted and yet, on the other hand, many things, merely mentioned or even omitted by the Synoptists, are added or enlarged upon. That is the editor's privilege to complement and evaluate.

To demonstrate how ludicrous it would be to apply the strict rules of textual criticism to the daily press, we shall quote in parallel columns two articles on the same human interest story, printed in two evening newspapers on February 20, 1941.

ST. LOUIS STAR-TIMES:

"It took both the police and fire departments to free Mr. and Mrs. Eli Schwartz from the Schwartz Bros. Dental Laboratory on the eighth floor of the Waldheim Platt Building, 513 Olive Street, last night. Schwartz and his wife had worked late and when ready to depart at 8 o'clock found the elevator operator had gone home, leaving the elevator at the first-floor level. There is an enclosed stairway at the rear of the building, but Schwartz said he had no key to open the door leading to the stairs.

"Police were summoned, and Schwartz called to them from a window that he would drop his front door key to them in a cardboard box, so they could open the building and take the elevator up. Schwartz dropped the box, but it landed on a third-floor ledge.

"Police then summoned firemen from Engine Company No. 6 at Ninth and Market streets, and the firemen raised a ladder to the ledge, breaking two third-

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH:

"Police and firemen were called last night to release Eli Schwartz, 7520 Byron place, Clayton, and his wife from the eighth floor of an office building at 513 Olive street, where they were marooned after the elevator operator departed.

"Schwartz telephoned police at 8:15 o'clock, explaining his plight. When officers arrived in front of the building he shouted from a window that he would toss the key to the locked street door to them in a small box -- but the box landed on the third-floor ledge.

"The police sent for Hook and Ladder Co. No. 6. The firemen reached the key with a ladder, but only after the ladder slipped and broke two panes in a third-floor window. Policemen then ran the elevator up to the eighth floor for Mr. and Mrs. Schwartz, who explained that their way to the stairs was barred by a locked door. Schwartz is president of Schwartz Bros. Dental Laboratory, which has offices in the building."



floor windows in the process, retrieved the key and freed Mr. and Mrs. Schwartz, who reside at 7520 Byron place."

Though the first article has but eleven words more than the second, we notice after a careful scrutiny that there are minute differences in the presentation and in the facts related. Modern Bible critics would make much of these variances. Let us follow their critical tactics and see to what absurd conclusions they will lead us. This is the very method employed by them to show that the four gospels were not written by the men whose names they bear, but by later compilers.

The fact that the first article contains seven additional remarks, e. g., that the name of the building was Waldheim Platt, that the elevator had been left on the first-floor level by the operator, that the stairway was enclosed and at the rear of the building, that the box, which was tossed, was cardboard, that the rescuing police took the elevator up to the trapped pair, and that the firemen were from Ninth and Market streets, would prove conclusively that the writer at the STAR-TIMES, as is postulated also for the first gospel, had at least one additional source of information from which to make his compilation, that the writer at the POST-DISPATCH, or as the second gospel, did not have. We will call that additional source "Q," just to give it a name, as the critics do. In the second article there are but three additions to the story, e. g., that Mr. and Mrs. Schwartz lived in Clayton, that he telephoned police, and that he was president of the Schwartz Bros. Dental Laboratory. That shows in the first place that the writing of this article was prior to the first, since it is more compact, and in the second place that these three additional remarks may be later inter-



polations, since they are not found in the first account. Therefore the POST-DISPATCH item, as the gospel of St. Mark, was the original. The STAR-TIMES, as also St. Matthew, formulated its news report by compiling the article written by the second man with that of the writer of "Q."

That our supposition concerning interpolations cannot be mere guesswork is brought out conclusively by the contradictions in the texts at hand. There are four such in these short articles. The first article gives the time as 8 o'clock, whereas the second gives 8:15 o'clock. In one it is Engine Company No. 6 which is called; in two it is Hook and Ladder Co. No. 6. The first man tells of two third-floor windows that are broken; the second mentions only one window. The firemen execute the final rescue in the STAR-TIMES, but the police free the couple in the POST-DISPATCH. Is not that sufficient evidence? --- Such is the procedure of the modern school, when dealing with the gospels. Wherever a slight difference occurs on the surface of the four gospel accounts, they immediately brand it either as an interpolation or as coming from a variant source.

No one will deny that those differences exist between the two articles, cited above, but that such deductions can be made from meager variations is absurd! The facts are easily reconciled! No one, without a conscious effort, would even notice those few apparent discrepancies, unless he purposely studied the articles with that end in mind. It is purely arbitrary reasoning.

Then why should such a process, which is entirely subjective, be applied to the four gospels? That there were sources from which the evangelists culled material is not denied. St. Luke includes such a con-



3) fession in his prologue. But that we can identify and evaluate these sources and twist them to our likes is another story. Bowen, though of the critical school, warns, "In general, this idea that everything in early Christian Literature and practice has a 'source,' had to be 'borrowed' from some where else, is one of the most gratuitous vagaries that trouble the critical mind of today."<sup>4)</sup>

Still that is the pet hobby of the modern negative scholar. These are their statements: "The whole story of the Passion is so saturated with mythology that the sifting out of any historical foundation may be regarded as out of the question."<sup>5)</sup> Again: "In the main, the events of Passion Week follow the order of Mark, although Luke contains fragments of a tradition that does not always harmonize with its Marcan setting."<sup>6)</sup> Or again: "... Luke and Matthew hold in solution as it were a second document, called Q (Quelle), or the non-Marcan, which yields us a few incidents and a great many sayings and parables of Jesus. Now this second document, so utterly separate from and independent of Mark that it does not even allude to the crucifixion and death episodes, nevertheless has Jesus all through for its central figure."<sup>7)</sup> Thus we could go on indefinitely!

---

3) "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word; it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed."



The man who developed this subjective criticism to its extreme is David Strauss, who gives an insight into his theory of evaluating history with the words: "Lastly, we see most plainly the object which the narrative has in view, and so we become distrustful of its historical character."<sup>8)</sup> By hinging history on the subjective reader, who needs but find a cause for the report to nullify its worth, Strauss was able to compress the entire gospel account into a myth. Fortunately Strauss and his school are recognized as prophets of a by-gone day.

<sup>9)</sup>  
"Hypothesis in history is absurd," one historian has truthfully said. We cannot make the rules to suit our fancies. We cannot write history to fit our theories. History has to be taken at its face value. A priori suppositions are out of the question. Back in the fifth century of our era St. Augustine commented disparagingly on such tactics, "... Such a reasoner is simply imposing laws upon the historians of truth in his own overweening pride."<sup>10)</sup>

We shall rather accept the four gospels as recording the true history of the death and suffering of Jesus Christ. That they must be received as authoritative we have proved in the first chapter.

- 
- 4) Bowen, C.R., "Comments on the Fourth Gospel," Anglican Theological Review, XII, iii, p. 227.      5) Brandes, Georg, op. cit., p. 182.  
6) Case, Shirley Jackson, Jesus a New Biography, p. 272.  
7) Conybeare, F.C., op. cit., p. 97.  
8) Strauss, David F., A New Life of Jesus, p. 362.  
9) Dalcho, Dr., an historian of Freemasonry, Ahiman Rezon, 1822, quoted in Ronayne, Edmond, The Master's Carpet, p. 201.



That they do not contain contradictory statements, which cancel their historical value, we shall show in the following chapters. An honest discussion of these matters will bring forth evidence sufficient to warrent the statement of Steinmeyer, "Here [in the Passion history] the harmonistic difficulties are so unimportant that no serious objections can be founded on them, for in all essential points the four Evangelical narratives agree with each other."<sup>11)</sup> Laying aside the subjectivism of modern criticism, we will champion the objectivity, outlined already by Saint Augustine, "For we have to deal simply with the question concerning the harmony of the evangelists, from whose varied modes of narration we gather the wholesome lesson that, in order to get at the truth, the one essential thing to aim at in dealing with the terms is simply the intention which the speaker had in view in using them."<sup>12)</sup>

In that manner we will look at the section of the life of Jesus Christ which lies before us. A conservative student is always looked upon as a bigot and the radical, as open-minded. The past paragraphs have been written to show the procedure of both sides. In what is to come the wide divergence of the two schools in the approach to each section of the Passion history shall be brought out more clearly. As to which side is bigotted, subjective, and hypothetic in its views we leave to the reader.

---

10) Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, Harmony of the Gospels, III, xiii, 48, in A Select Library of the Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, p. 201.

11) Steinmeyer, F.L., The History of the Passion and Resurrection of Our Lord, p. 4.

12) Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, op. cit., III, iv, 14, p. 184.



### III.

#### ON THE DATE OF THE PASSION HISTORY

The Passion history proper begins with the entrance of Jesus into the Garden of Gethsemane on Thursday evening and ends with His burial on Friday evening. In entering upon the harmony of the Passion story itself we shall have to dispose of another problem, namely, the dating of these events, which run over a twenty-four hour period. That Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper on a Thursday evening and that He died on a Friday afternoon tradition has assured us by giving to these two days the appropriate names of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. Yet the exact dates of these two days have long been contested.

Just previous to these days Jesus had come to Jerusalem to  
celebrate the Passover festival and to bring His ministry to an end.<sup>1)</sup>  
We shall correlate these two events with the aid of the evidence at  
hand. We do know that the Passover meal was to be eaten on the evening  
of the fourteenth of the month Nisan (April), the first month of the  
Jewish religious calendar.<sup>2)</sup> However, we must be very careful in dis-  
tinguishing between this festival, which was celebrated in one evening,  
ending at midnight, and the Feast of Unleavened Bread, which followed  
immediately after, from the fifteenth to the twenty-first of Nisan. Dur-

---

1) Cfr. Mt. 20, 17 ff. and John 12, 1. 12.

2) Cfr. Ex. 12, 6; Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, II, xiv, 6.



ing these seven days there could be no leaven in the Jewish house. Eventually these two festivals were looked upon as one, lasting from the afternoon of the fourteenth until the twenty-first of Nisan. Even Josephus, the Jewish historian, speaks of it in that manner. <sup>3)</sup> Also in the Old and New Testaments this entire festival is, at times, called the <sup>4)</sup> Passover or just the Feast. Then to complicate matters more it must be borne in mind that the Jewish manner of reckoning time differs from the European. The fifteenth of Nisan began officially at sun-down on the fourteenth of Nisan. The Jewish day is still counted from sun-down to sun-down, not from midnight to midnight.

These aspects of these two festivals must be remembered when we turn now to the four gospel accounts. When the evidence, presented by the evangelists, is carefully sifted, we feel that an honest agreement is found to exist, which truth, though, as gold, must be slowly and painfully panned from the uneven bed of a turbulent stream, before it will gleam forth in all its brilliance. David Baron has aptly said, <sup>5)</sup> "Scripture never leaves anything to be guessed." We will now examine Scripture's accounts with open minds.

#### THE SYNOPTIC ACCOUNTS

On Tuesday of Holy Week Jesus had a very busy day. It began with Him teaching in the temple and ended with Him seated on the Mount of Olives with the disciples, when He told them of the terrible cata-

---

3) "Whence it is, that, in memory of the want we were then in, we kept a feast for eight days, which is called the feast of the unleavened bread." Antiquities of the Jews, II, xv, 1. Italics supplied.

4) Cfr. Ez. 45, 21; I<sup>st</sup> Chron. 30, 5. 22; Lk. 22, 1; Jn. 2, 13. 23; et al.



strophe which would fall upon this city which had rejected Him. We can well imagine that by the time this discourse was finished it was late in the evening after sundown. It was then that Jesus remarked, "You know that after two days is the Passover."<sup>6)</sup> According to Jewish reckoning that meant two days from Tuesday evening until Thursday evening.

The chief priests and scribes convened right before this festive week in order to lay some plans for killing Jesus. This meeting was probably held on Wednesday, since St. Luke, when reporting on this meeting, seems to hint at the closeness of the feast. "And the feast of the Azymes, which is called the Passover, drew near. And the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might kill Him, for they feared the people."<sup>7)</sup> This would be the best day for Judas to get in contact with the Jewish religious leaders. He probably came to Jerusalem alone, for it seems from the silence of the gospels that Jesus remained in Bethany all day Wednesday. Since Judas was the treasurer of the group, it would be his duty to purchase the lamb for the fast-approaching festival. On taking it to the temple from the sheep-market to be inspected, he had an opportunity to speak to the enemies of his Master at the palace of the high priest. In our view this is more likely than the assumption that the two disciples who prepared the Feast on the following day purchased the lamb at or near the temple.

The next day, Thursday, is termed "the first of the azymes,"<sup>8)</sup>

---

5) Baron, David, The Servant of Jehovah, p. 45.

6) Mt. 26, 2. We shall translate the discourses from Nestle's text.

7) Lk. 22, 1. 2.

8) Mt. 26, 17.



that is, the first day of unleavened bread, the fourteenth of Nisan,<sup>9)</sup>  
the afternoon of which Jesus sent His two disciples, St. Peter and St.  
John, to prepare the Passover meal.<sup>10)</sup>

The succeeding events of the evening, as described by the Syn-  
optists, fit in well with the Jewish Passover celebration. The two dis-  
ciples were sent to find a certain man, bearing a pitcher of water. At  
his home they were to prepare the meal, after the lamb had been killed  
at the temple at the prescribed hour. "This is," as Dalman writes, "in  
keeping with the teaching of the Jewish tradition that the houses of  
Jerusalem were the common property of the people and should not there-  
fore be let for money. . . . Even for the divans and bolsters no pay-  
ment was to be asked; the only compensation was the skins of the sacri-  
ficed animals. . . . There was nothing extraordinary in the fact that  
the owner of the house granted the request of the Disciples; it was  
more surprising that they encountered one who still had a free place to  
offer."<sup>11)</sup>

The probable solution to the last statement can be found in  
the fact that Jesus ate this last meal at the house of friends, who may  
well have been the parents of John Mark, for they did have a large house  
in the city.<sup>12)</sup> The secrecy of their arrangements was deemed necessary,

---

9) Dalman would have this be the fifteenth of Nisan, for he holds that  
"no instructed Jew could have called the eve of the Feast 'the first  
day of the Feast'; only a Gentile could possibly have thought of the  
day of the offering of the Passover lamb and the night of the Passover  
meal as the first day of the Feast." (Dalman, G., Jesus - Jeshua, p.  
105.) However, as we have noted above, Josephus himself makes such a  
distinction in the Antiquities of the Jews, II, xv, 1. (cfr. p. 16.)

10) "And the disciples did as Jesus commanded them, and they prepared  
the Passover." Mt. 26, 19.



so that Judas might not interrupt this farewell meal with his plot for betrayal. This would also explain the presence of the young lad, presumably John Mark, in the Garden later in the evening.

But what of the circumstances after the meal? Do not they militate against the assumption that this was the eve of the Passover? Jesus, first of all, walked to the <sup>U</sup>arden of Gethsemane. Were not the people to remain in their houses that night, according to the law of Moses? <sup>13)</sup> In answer to this Dalman reminds us that "Jewish tradition

. . . rightly limited this prohibition to the Passover of the Exodus itself." <sup>14)</sup> For the later celebrations of this meal the rabbis, following Deuteronomy 16, 7, had extended the environment of the sanctuary to include all Jerusalem and much of its surrounding territory. Therefore Jesus' walk was still within the prescribed limits.

Some object that it was against Jewish custom to carry swords on the eve of such a high festival, as did some of the disciples and the temple guard. But we are told that "Galilaean pilgrims probably took their arms to be a part of their attire, as they would today, and, in reply to any Pharisaic objection, they would have pointed out that in such times danger of life made arms as indispensable during festive seasons as on other days. In any case, soldiers had to have their arms ready at hand on the Sabbath, if the permission to defend oneself on that day was to be of any practical value." <sup>15)</sup>

---

11) Dalman, G., op. cit., pp. 107. 108. 12) Cfr. Acts 12, 12.

13) Exodus 12, 22: "And none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning."

14) Dalman, G., op. cit., p. 94 (Tos. Pes. viii. 14. 17.).



But what of the trial and crucifixion of Jesus on Passover night and even on the great Feast day itself, the fifteenth of Nisan, was that permitted? Men of the caliber of Caiaphas and Annas did not stop for petty laws, when their jealousy was aroused. From Josephus we learn that among the duties of the priests were the following: 16)

"These men had the main care of the law and of the other parts of the people's conduct committed to them; for they were the priests who were ordained to be the spectators of all, and the judges in doubtful cases, and the punishers of those that were condemned to suffer punishment."

We can well imagine that they felt it their duty to root out, when the opportunity presented itself, this disturber of the people, this man, who openly disregarded the sacred Sabbath law. At times, when emergencies arose, even this Sabbath ordinance was abrogated, when it was a matter of defense or punishment. Josephus records such cases, as does also the Old Testament in reporting one case of a stoning on a Sabbath. 17)

Would it seem too far afield to suggest that the case of Jesus was one which the priests felt must be dealt with immediately? Later in the early days of the Church in Jerusalem, when James, the Lord's brother, was Bishop of Jerusalem, he was stoned to death during the Passover festival. There are also other incidents in the Talmud, which prove that Jewish law was not inviolable and, therefore, did not keep the Jews from passing sentences and inflicting punishments at forbidden times, when the hour demanded it. 19)

---

15) Dalman, G., op. cit., p. 97. 16) Against Apion, II, 22.

17) Cfr. Antiquities of the Jews, XII, i, 3; XVIII, ix, 2; Num. 15, 32 ff.

18) Eusebius, Church History, II, xxiii; Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews, XX, ix, 1.



Still some complain that the day of the crucifixion could not have been a high Feast day, for it is stated in St. Mark's and St. Luke's gospels that Simon of Cyrene, upon whom the Roman soldiers laid the cross, was "coming out of the country."<sup>20)</sup> From this they infer that

Simon of Cyrene had been working and was now coming into the city for the evening Passover meal. That, however, is not the meaning of the phrase. By comparing other passages, where the word for "country" is used, we learn that it means really "outside of the city."<sup>21)</sup> This Simon, as his name indicates, came from Cyrene in northern Africa. During the Passover these Jews of the diaspora, when unable to find lodgings in the city, now teeming with multitudes of visitors, often built

---

19) "Said R. Elezer to them: Did not Simeon b. Shetha hang females in the city of Askalon? And he was answered: He hanged eighty women in one day, and there is a rule that even two must not be sentenced in one day, if the punishment is with the same death. (Hence Simeon's act was only temporary, because of the need of that time . . . .)"

"So it happened with one who rode on a horse on Sabbath, at the time Palestine was under the Greeks, and this man was brought before the court, and stoned, not because he deserved such a punishment, but because it was a necessity of that time, to warn others. And it also happened that one had connection with his wife under a fig tree, and he also was brought to the court, and was punished with stripes, not because he deserved such a punishment, but because of the necessity of that time." (Babylonian Talmud, "Tract Sanhedrin," pp. 139.141.)

20) Mk. 15, 21; Lk. 23, 26.

21) In Mk. 13, 16 Jesus says: "And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment." Just as the man on the housetop, in the preceding verse, is not to return into the house to remove anything, so he that is in the country is not to return to the city to salvage his coat. In Mk. 16, 12 we read concerning the Emmaus disciples: "After that He appeared in another form unto two of them, as they went into the country," that is, as they left the city to walk to Emmaus. In all these cases the word for "country" or "field" in Greek is ἀγρός.



huts for themselves and their families outside the city walls on the hill sides. He was probably just returning to the city from his temporary dwelling, when, accosted by the Roman soldiers, he was compelled to bear the cross after Jesus.

Another objection is raised in regard to the preparation of the body and the burial of the dead Jesus on Friday evening. Yet, Dal-  
22)  
men, the German authority on Jewish law, writes:

"Everything speaks for the fact that, Jewishly expressed, the dutiful care for the dead abrogated the Sabbath; and when there was a ready made grave to be found, the burial could take place on the Sabbath or feast-day. It is also conceivable that when a Sabbath should follow a feast-day on which, by the way, work was only partially prohibited, such a day was of less importance than the Sabbath, and in relation to it considered but an ordinary work-day in regard to such a matter as a burial, so that Sabbath rest would be strictly observed. One could even argue that, according to Deut. 16, 7, the first day of the Feast of unleavened bread was not a day of rest at all, as one could go back 'to the tents' on that day."

In the light of that commentary on Sabbath and Feast-day customs we see nothing objectionable in the action of Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus, and the women after the expiration of Jesus on the cross.

#### THE JOHANNINE ACCOUNT

When we turn to the gospel of St. John we are told that we will find statements contrary to those in the Synoptists. The critical schools have not been slow to point out that St. John seems to favor the thirteenth of Nisan for the Last Supper and the fourteenth of Nisan for the crucifixion, in other words, placing all these last events one day earlier than the first three writers. Some, therefore, of more conservative leanings attempt to bring the first three gospels into harmony with that of St. John. They, however, follow the chronology of the



fourth evangelist, since they feel certain that St. John wants to picture Jesus as the true Passover lamb and that, therefore, the time of His death must be on the fourteenth of Nisan in the afternoon, when all the Passover lambs were killed in the temple, thus portraying the true symbolical character of Jesus' suffering and crucifixion.

Though this view agrees with a Jewish tradition concerning  
23)  
the time of Jesus' end, we shall peruse these verses, which seem to conflict with the first three evangelists and show that they are not discordant. Even Ernest D. Burton and Shailer Mathews have to admit, ". . . Many scholars bring John into harmony with the Synoptists. On the whole, though not without its difficulties, this last seems the most  
24)  
probable view, demanding no serious harmonistic device."

The Johamine group readily cites St. Paul as a champion of their scheme. Does not the apostle write to the early Christians, "Even  
25)  
Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us"? Is not Jesus pictured as the true Passover lamb, whose death coincided with the slaughtering of the lambs in the temple? St. Paul does use that symbol here, as even  
26)  
John the Baptist had used it before him. That, however, does not

---

22) Dalman, G., op. cit., p. 103.

23) "There is a tradition: On the eve of the Sabbath and the Passover they hung Jesus. And the herald went forth before him for forty days crying, 'Jesus goeth to be executed, because he has practiced sorcery and seduced Israel and estranged them from God. Let any one who can bring forward any justifying plea for him come and give information concerning it;' but no justifying plea was found for him, and so he was hung on the eve of the Sabbath and the Passover." Quoted from "Tract Sanhedrin" by Baron, D., op. cit., p. 105. Some claim that this is a different Jesus, and perhaps rightly so.

24) Burton, E. D., and Mathews, S., The Life of Christ, pp. 248. 249.



show that they believed Him to have died before the Passover meal was eaten. St. Paul, in fact, is careful to mention in his description of the institution of the Lord's Supper the technical name for the third cup of wine, drunk at the Passover meal, "The cup of blessing,"<sup>27)</sup> which definitely links up the Last Supper with the Passover on Thursday evening, the fourteenth of Nisan.

The first hint of a date that St. John gives his readers during the Passion story reads: "Therefore six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany."<sup>28)</sup> That means that Jesus arrived at the small village near Jerusalem on the eighth of Nisan. If the fourteenth of Nisan were on a Friday, as some suppose, then the eighth fell on a Saturday and Jesus and His followers made an unthought of journey on the Sabbath,<sup>29)</sup> as recorded in the Synoptists. However, tradition has ascribed the triumphal entrance into Jerusalem to a Sunday, still called "Palm Sunday." The meal at Bethany took place after Jesus' arrival there and the day before His entrance into Jerusalem,<sup>30)</sup> hence on the Sabbath. That leaves Friday for the events at Jericho and the journey to Bethany. Therefore Friday is the eighth of Nisan and the following Thursday is the fourteenth, the night of the Passover. St. John is in perfect harmony with the other three here. It would seem strange if he were to change his view-point in the succeeding chapters!

Still, it has been said by some that St. John clearly dates

---

25) I Cor. 5, 7.

26) Jn. 1, 29: "lamb of God".

27) I Cor. 10, 16.

28) Jn. 12, 1.

29) Acts 1, 12.

30) Jn. 12, 12.



the meal, which he records as the Last Supper, as taking place "before  
31) the Feast of the Passover." It is true that the meal, described in  
the next verses, is the very one found in the three other gospels at  
which Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, though St. John omits, as he  
does so often, what he feels every reader already knows from the three  
other evangelists, namely, the words of institution. But just what is  
the relationship between this meal and the "before" above it? Is St.  
John, as some would tell us, trying to correct the Synoptists in their  
dating of the Last Supper, changing it from the fourteenth to the thir-  
teenth of Nisan? That seems out of the question, for the apostle certain-  
ly would not have used such an ambiguous term -- "before." That would  
mean that the meal could be placed on any night from Sunday until Wed-  
nesday, since the last events related by St. John still took place on  
Palm Sunday. 32) The real import of these words, "before the Feast of  
the Passover," is that they link up the days intervening and inform  
the reader as to the thoughts and actions of Jesus. They are, so to  
say, a separate, introductory paragraph, hence have no bearing whatso-  
ever on the date of the Passover meal. 33)

---

31) Jn. 13, 1.

32) Cfr. Jn. 12, 12 - 50.

33) Meyer, nevertheless, holds: "Da nun mit δειπνῶν am Abend des 14.  
Nisan das eigentliche Fest begann, kann hier nur der Abend des 13.  
Nisan gemeint sein." (Meyer, H.A.W., Kommentar ueber das Neue Testa-  
ment, Handbuch ueber das Evangelium des Johannes, p. 502.) He claims  
that those who refer the time element solely to verse one are merely  
seeking a harmonistic device. He asserts that the "loving" in verse  
one is explained immediately by the action of Jesus in the following  
verses. That is correct. But the "before" clause, to be technical,  
includes all Jesus' action up to sunset of Thursday night, Nisan four-  
teen, when the Feast of Unleavened Bread officially began, for then  
it was Nisan fifteen, according to Jewish custom. At six o'clock that  
night all leaven, found in the house, was burned. Therefore this phrase  
in verse one brings the reader right up to the evening of the Passover  
meal. The actions of that night are the fulfillment of the words of St.  
John still agrees with the Synoptists!



During this meal Judas, the betrayer, left the table, and "some thought, since Judas kept the money bag, that Jesus said to him, 'Buy those things for which we have need for the Feast,' or that he should give something to the poor." <sup>34)</sup> If the Passover meal were in progress, why would the disciples think that Jesus sent Judas for provisions for the "Feast"? As we have noted elsewhere, the Passover festival consisted of two parts, the Passover meal proper and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It would be very natural that, since Jesus had made no preparations for these coming days because of His impending death, the disciples would realize this lack of consideration and connect this departure of Judas with such a necessary errand. That this was late in the evening of a high Feast did not invalidate such late preparations. <sup>35)</sup>

But, on the other hand, had the supposed shopping excursion been for the Passover meal, it would have been unnecessary, since Jesus and the disciples would have had the entire next day to buy and prepare the essentials, for the meal would not have been held until the following evening. This passage points very evidently to the fact that this meal was the Passover and that the disciples were looking forward to the seven day Feast of Unleavened Bread.

---

34) Jn. 13, 19.

35) "... In the Talmud . . . , even when the day before the feast of unleavened bread fell upon the Sabbath, necessary purchases for the feast should be permitted, in spite of the stringent Sabbath laws." (Ylvisaker, J., The Gospels, p. 643.)

"Sufficient here to state, that the provision and preparation of the needful food, and indeed of all that was needful for the Feast, was allowed on the 15th Nisan. And this must have been specially necessary when, as in this instance, the first festive day, or 15th Nisan, was to be followed by a Sabbath, on which no such work was permitted." (Edersheim, A., The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, II, p. 508.)



Another reference to the date of Jesus' death in St. John's gospel comes in connection with the transfer of Jesus by the priests. "Then they lead Jesus from Caiaphas to the Pretorium, and it was early; and they themselves did not go into the Pretorium, so that they would not be defiled but might eat the Passover." <sup>36)</sup> We will grant for the moment that this was the morning before the eve of the Passover meal. Would entering the house of a pagan defile these priests until after sundown, when the next day began? No, for all defilement ceased that evening! <sup>37)</sup> They must have feared being barred from some other meal that would come during that day. That meal could be found on the fifteenth of Nisan in the Chagigah or thankoffering. <sup>38)</sup> "Passover" is here used in its wider sense. This is not forcing the text to suit our contentions! But it is gratuitous to demand the narrow meaning, when the other usage was a common idiom of the times! That is why Joseph of Arimathea did not hesitate to enter Pilate's domicile <sup>39)</sup> and ask for the body of Jesus, for he had already celebrated the solemnity of the Chagigah that afternoon, whereas the priests in the morning had not.

In three different passages St. John designates the day on which Jesus crucified as "the preparation." <sup>40)</sup> It is claimed on the

36) Jn. 18, 28.

37) Cfr. Lev. 15, 5 ff.

38) Meyer disagrees again: "Das *φάγειν τὸ πάσχα* . . . steht naemlich durchgaengig in N.T. (Mt. 26, 17; Mk. 14, 12. 14; Lk. 22, 11. 15...), wie bei Joseph. und im Talmud. . . , vom Essen des Passahlammes, und nicht, wie die Harmonisten wollen, von den Festopferspeisen mit Ausschluss des Lammes, namentlich auch nicht von der *חֲבִית*..." (Meyer, H.A.W., op. cit., p. 644.) However, elsewhere in St. John's gospel "Passover" is used to designate the entire Passover festival, cfr. 2, 13. 23; 6, 4; 11, 55; 12, 1; 13, 1, which includes the Chagigah, offered immediately after the morning service and eaten probably right before evening.

39) Mt. 27, 57. 58.

40) Cfr. Jn. 19, 14. 31. 42.



basis of this term that the day was the day before the Passover, the fourteenth of Nisan, on which the Jews were to prepare for the meal of that evening. This is an erroneous opinion. Nowhere is this term used to describe the day of preparation before the Passover. It is the Jewish word for "Friday," παρασκευή for προέββατον, that is, the day of preparation for the Sabbath. The Synoptists also agree with St. John in placing the crucifixion on a Friday, when they use this term.<sup>41)</sup> In contemporary literature we find the same word for the day before the Sabbath.<sup>42)</sup> Even to this day it is the Greek word for "Friday."<sup>43)</sup> In the final analysis all that St. John infers in the three verses, where this word "preparation" found, is that Jesus died on a Friday, the day before the Sabbath.

One more source of information must be considered before we conclude this discussion on the date of the Passion of Jesus Christ. During the first centuries of Christianity a controversy arose in which this very problem played an integral part. Eusebius, the ancient Church historian, describes this conflict:<sup>44)</sup>

"The churches of all Asia, guided by a remoter tradition, supposed that they ought to keep the fourteenth day of the moon for the festival of the Savior's passover, in which days the Jews were commanded to kill the paschal lamb; and it was incumbent on them, at all times, to make and end of the fast on this day, on whatever day of the week it should happen to fall. But as it was not the custom to celebrate in this manner in the churches through-

---

41) Cfr. Mt. 27, 62; Mk. 15, 42; Lk. 23, 54.

42) "Caesar Augustus . . . ordained thus: . . . they be not obliged to go before any judge on the Sabbath-day, nor on the day of the preparation to it (ἡ τῇ πρὸ τούτης παρασκευῇ), after the ninth hour..." (Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, XVI, vi, 2) "For they fast on Monday and Thursday, but you fast on Wednesday and Friday (τὰρ εὐχόμενοι)." (*Didache*, VIII)



out the rest of the world, who observe the practice that has prevailed from apostolic tradition until the present time, so that it would not be proper to terminate our fast on any other but the day of the resurrection of our Savior."

Since these eastern Christians celebrated the death of Jesus on the same day as the Old Testament Passover, the fourteenth of Nisan, they were called the Quartodecimans, i. e., the fourteenth day observers. The western Christians, on the other hand, insisted that Easter must be celebrated on a Sunday, since Jesus rose on a Sunday. They, therefore, always commemorated the death of Jesus on the preceding Friday. In recording this strife between the churches Eusebius quotes profusely from Polycrates, one of the eastern bishops. This man cites, as sustaining his views, the Apostle Philip; his three daughters; St. John, the apostle; Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna; Thraseas, Bishop of Eumenia; Papirius; Sagaris, Bishop, buried at Laodicea; and Melito. He concludes:

45)

"All these have consistently celebrated Easter on the fourteenth day in accordance with the gospel and have made no exceptions therein, but have followed the rule of faith. . . For seven of my relatives have been bishops, and I am the eighth, and my relatives have always celebrated the day, when the people lay aside the leaven."

Here, we are told, is direct evidence against our harmony of the Synoptists and St. John, for it is plainly stated that in the East the death of Jesus was commemorated on the day of the Passover, Nisan fourteen, and, furthermore, that St. John is quoted as an authority for

---

43) We shall reproduce the date line of a copy of the Atlantis, national daily Greek newspaper, which is given in English and Greek: "Vol. XLVIII. - No. 15,511. New York, N.Y., Friday, April 4, 1941. . . .  
Τόμος 48ος. - Ἀριθ. 15,511 ΝΕΑ ΥΟΡΚΗ, ΠΑΡΑΣΚΕΥΗ, 4  
ΑΠΡΙΛΙΟΥ 1941."

44) Eusebius, Church History, V, xxiii. 45) Eusebius, op. cit., V, xxiv.



this date. Though this seems patent, nevertheless, it is not the fact. Polycrates, in the statement above, twice makes mention of the basis for their practice, namely, "the gospel" and "the rule of faith." Since the four gospels were common property also to those Christians in the East, these men did not follow only the fourth Evangelist, but all four. They did not find a contradiction between the Synoptists and St. John. The fact that they mention St. John especially is due to the fact that he lived there during his last years. It is natural then that the men in the East followed the custom, begun by this apostle.

This practice in the East was not one conflicting with our date of the death of Jesus, for, since they were more under the influence of Judaism than their brethren in the West, they celebrated the institution of the Lord's Supper on the same night on which Jesus celebrated it, on Nisan fourteen, Passover evening. Together with this commemoration they ended their Lenten fast and celebrated the Lord's Supper, recalling at the same time the death of Jesus. This they termed the Christian Passover, since they looked to Jesus as the true Passover lamb.

But in the West the Christians always dated the end of their Lenten fast according to the day on which Jesus rose from the dead, Easter Sunday. That brought about an irritating confusion in the early Church, for, while one part of Christendom was still fasting and looking forward to the Easter communion, the other section completed the preparatory fast and commemorated this Christian Passover with Holy Communion. That was the cause for the conflict between East and West, as Schaff concludes: <sup>46)</sup>

" . . . These ancient paschal controversies did not hinge on the



chronological question or the true date of Christ's death at all, but on the week-day and manner of its annual observance. The question was whether the paschal communion should be celebrated on the fourteenth of Nisan, or on the Sunday of the resurrection festival, without regard to the Jewish chronology."

Therefore, instead of finding data in favor of the critics' opinions, we learn that also these early Christians viewed the gospels as being in agreement and that they celebrated the institution of the Last Supper on the Passover evening, the fourteenth of Nisan, as St. John had done before them.

This evidence, as presented in the chapter above, should carry enough weight to remove all obstacles and prove our contention that Jesus ate the Passover on the proper evening and died on the high Feast day, the fifteenth of Nisan, as the three Synoptists and St. John very clearly indicate.

---

46) Schaff, Philip, History of the Christian Church, Vol. II, p. 220.



## IN THE GARDEN

When the Passover meal was ended, Jesus left with His eleven disciples and went His way toward the Mount of Olives on the western slope of which was a garden of olive trees, where He was accustomed to spend His nights during this holy week. This plot of ground, known as the Garden of Gethsemane, because of an oil press which was located there, was now belonged to some friend of His, perhaps, in the room where He ate His last supper, to the parents of John the Baptist.

## PART II

### A HARMONY OF THE PASSION STORY

While walking toward the Garden, Jesus spoke to His disciples about many things. And just before His entrance into the Garden itself He prayed one of the prayers most cherished by all Christians. He prayed among other things "For them also which shall believe on Him through the disciples' word."<sup>1)</sup> In the first hours of His anguish Jesus prayed for the Christians of all ages. What an exalted example of love!

Critics have argued that such a mental change from the Jesus of the High Priestly Prayer to the Jesus in the Garden, withering like a tree in the desert, is an utter impossibility. St. John, they claim, knows nothing of such a Garden scene. His Christ goes serenely and triumphantly to His death.<sup>2)</sup> Does this claim find a foundation in the

---

<sup>1)</sup> Jn. 17, 9.

<sup>2)</sup> Every attempt to insert, in John, the synoptic story between the



## I.

### IN THE GARDEN

With the Passover meal completed, Jesus left with His eleven disciples and made His way toward the Mount of Olives on the western slopes of which was a garden of olive trees, where He was accustomed to spend His nights during this holy week. This plot of ground, known as the Garden of Gethsemane, because of an oil press which was located there, may have belonged to some friend of Jesus, perhaps, as the room where He ate His last supper, to the parents of John Mark.

While making His way to the Garden, Jesus spoke to His disciples about many things. And just before His entrance into the Garden itself He prayed one of the prayers most cherished by all Christians. He prayed among other things "for them also which shall believe on Him through the disciples' word."<sup>1)</sup> In the first hours of His anguish Jesus prayed for the Christians of all ages. What an exalted example of true love!

Critics have carped that such a mental change from the Jesus of the High Priestly Prayer to the Jesus in the Garden, writhing like a worm in the dust, is an utter impossibility. St. John, they claim, knew nothing of such a Garden scene. His Christ goes serenely and triumphantly to His death.<sup>2)</sup> Does this claim find a foundation in the

---

1) Jn. 17, 20.

2) "Every attempt to insert, in John, the synoptic Agony between the



gospels, or is it a subjective innovation?

That St. John omits this phase of the Garden episode is very much in keeping with his general plan. He is supplementing the writings of the Synoptists. As Steinmeyer relates: 3)

"... We can easily understand how that evangelist who points on the very first page of his Gospel to the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world, the same Lamb of whom he says at its close, 'A bone of Him shall not be broken,' might feel that no interest would be served by his narrating an incident which was rooted in the traditions of Christendom no less firmly than was that other incident of which he is equally silent, the institution of the Lord's Supper."

Still he is careful to record one of Jesus' statements in the Garden in which there is a direct reference to His prayers, namely, when Jesus rebuked St. Peter, "The cup which the Father has given to Me shall I not drink it?" 4) That is the very cup of suffering over which Jesus had poured out His soul to the Father during His soul-stirring prayers. Were it not for the Synoptic accounts of these prayers, which St. John undoubtedly had before him, the readers of the fourth gospel would not sense the real connotation of Jesus' words.

Moreover, St. John, at other times, speaks of just such manifestations of the divine and the human in Christ, as are apparent here. At the grave of Lazarus we have a parallel account. First we see a truly human Jesus, weeping at the loss of a friend, and then we are given a fore-gleam of His heavenly majesty, when with a word He shakes the world

---

farewell speeches of Jesus from the 14th to the 17th chapter, and the approach of the traitor with his followers at the beginning of the 18th, is an attack not merely upon the moral elevation, but also generally upon the manly firmness of the character of Jesus. . . . One account does not presuppose the other, they are drawn from quite different points of view, they are quite incompatible representations, but in their present



of the dead and brings Lazarus forth alive. <sup>5)</sup> Would we call that a psychological impossibility to experience two such emotional extremes? We are dealing here with no mere man!

How can the critics say that here there is too sudden a metamorphosis? In the gospels there are definite hints as to this strange change in Jesus, previous to His hour of agony in the Garden. Already at the supper "He was troubled in spirit" <sup>6)</sup> at the thought of the approaching storm clouds of Gethsemane. And in the accounts of St. Matthew and St. Mark careful attention must be given to that phrase, "He began to be grieved and to be sorely troubled." <sup>7)</sup> In those words we have the real beginning of the suffering in the Garden, which was a second onslaught of Satan against Jesus. As His first temptation in the wilderness is reported in three skirmishes with the Devil, so His final conflict with the powers of evil is recorded in a triple prayer, ending likewise in victory. This final temptation brought to a close the "season" <sup>8)</sup> of the oft vanquished foe! To the honest man all these experiences from the depths of inner turmoil to the heights of heavenly majesty are quite comprehensible, for he accepts the Jesus of the gospels as true God and true man, who "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." <sup>9)</sup>

---

form neither of them can be looked upon as historical, and all we can say is that they are both fictitious, one being only the more simple in its conception, the other showing more reflection, and conscious purpose." (Strauss, D.F., op. cit., p. 333.)

3) Steinmeyer, F.L., op. cit., p. 71.

4) Jn. 18, 11.

5) Cfr. Jn. 11.

6) Jn. 13, 21.

7) Mt. 26, 37. Meyer: "ἤρξατο : Eintritt dieses Zustandes -- ἀποκριθεὶς : Klimax." (Meyer, H.A.W., op. cit., Handbuch ueber das Evangelium des Matthaeus, p. 515.)



As Jesus crossed the brook Kidron and neared the entrance-way into the Garden, He addressed His disciples: "Sit here, while I depart a bit and pray." <sup>10)</sup> And taking with Him Peter, James, and John, the same chosen three who had been privileged to witness Him, transfigured in His glory on the Mount, He made His way toward the interior of the Garden. As He walked, He made known to this trio the thoughts which were seething and boiling within Him. "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, unto death. Remain here and stay awake with Me! Pray that you do not enter into temptation." <sup>11)</sup>

Then leaving even these three friends behind, He went "about a stone's throw," <sup>12)</sup> and "fell down on His face and prayed, saying: 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me, nevertheless, not as I will it, but as You wish it to be.'" <sup>13)</sup> What a soul struggle must have ensued! So great was the anguish and the inner conflict of Jesus, He by whom "all things were made," <sup>14)</sup> that His Father had to send a creature to comfort Him. "And there appeared unto Him an angel from heaven," <sup>15)</sup> strengthening Him." <sup>16)</sup> And as the battle thickened,

---

8) Lk. 4, 13.      9) Heb. 4, 15.      10) Mt. 26, 36.      11) Mt. 26, 37.

12) Lk. 22, 41.      13) Mt. 26, 39.      14) Jn. 1, 3.

15) Farrar weakens his splendid narrative with such statements as this: "Under the dark shadows of the trees, amid the interrupted moonlight, it seems to them [the disciples] that there is an angel with Him, who supports His failing strength, who enables Him to rise victorious from those first prayers with nothing but the crimson traces of that bitter struggle upon His brow." (Farrar, F.W., The Life of Christ, p. 446.)

16) Lk. 22, 43. This first prayer of Jesus seems to be the most trying, according to the first two evangelists. We have therefore incorporated the verses of St. Luke at this point in the Synoptic narrative. The words of Jesus in both instances are almost identical with those found in the first two gospels. Since the tenor of Jesus' prayers appears



not only His soul was in agony, but also His very body felt the intensity of this struggle. There was a marked physical reaction. "And His sweat became as drops of blood falling down on the ground." 17) How long this prayer, which marshaled all the mental, physical, and spiritual energies within the make-up of Jesus, whose soul was here pressed, as between two huge rocks, by the greatest problem of His life, we are not informed. Prayer is not measured by the hour-glass but by the sounding line.

When He had prayed thus, He returned to the three disciples, only to find them asleep. They had watched with Him but a few minutes and had heard but the opening strains of that heart-rending prayer. What a lack of understanding they displayed! But Jesus, singling out St. Peter because of the bold statements of loyalty, which he had expressed on the way to the Garden, warned him, "So! -- Were you not strong enough to remain awake with Me one hour? Be wakeful and pray, that you do not enter into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." 18)

Then, again a second time, He left them and returned to His

---

to become lighter already in the second petition, and since the third, though not recorded, probably evinced more surety on the part of the suffering Jesus, the strong emotional and spiritual conflict in St. Luke's account, with its phenomenal results, would not fit into the following prayers. In fact St. Luke, thinking that the last two petitions were not as soul-trying as the first, does not even record them, but continues with the betrayal.

17) Lk. 22, 44. "Tertium comparationis," the point of comparison does not rest in the fulness nor in the weight of the drops, but in their color. It was a sweat of the hue of blood. His anguish compressed the heart, so as to force the blood through the pores and add its color to the sweat that oozed forth." (Ylvisaker, J., op. cit., p. 699.)

18) Mt. 26, 40. 41.



place of prayer. This ordeal was less strenuous, if we can judge from the few words left for us in the gospels. Jesus, strengthened by the first prayer, was becoming more resigned to the will of His Father. He prayed: "My Father, if it is <sup>not</sup> possible that this pass by, except I drink it, let Your will be done!" <sup>19)</sup> And having entreated His Father in that manner for some time, He again sought the comfort of His disciples. But in vain, for "He found them sleeping." <sup>20)</sup> And when Jesus roused them from their slumbers, the astonished and bewildered disciples were silenced by their shame; they had no answer for their Master's censuring words and glances.

The third prayer is not recorded, but we are told that Jesus just repeated the words of the previous prayer. By now He was becoming more fortified in the face of the oncoming struggle. An angel had assured Him after the first prayer that this was the will of His Father. And hence by this time His fevered, blood-moist brow had been cooled in the evening breezes. As He returned the third time to His drowsy <sup>21)</sup> disciples, in compassionate, yet understanding tones, He spoke: "Sleep on, for the remaining time, take your rest! Behold, the hour draws near when the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners." <sup>22)</sup>

---

19) Mt. 26, 42.

20) Mk. 14, 40.

21) There are some who would find sarcasm in Jesus' words, but that does not seem to fit the nature of the suffering Savior. Throughout the succeeding hours He has nothing but silent resignation or words of mercy for even His prosecutors. Would He then during these last moments vent His passion in irony on these disciples, who, He knows, will be the first to forsake Him? Rather He grants them this opportunity to rest, ere the troubled hours to come prove too much for them.

In the Liturgy and Agenda the compilers have tried to combine the last statement of St. Luke (22, 46) and the last statements of St. Matthew (26, 45. 46) and St. Mark (14, 41. 42) in the following way:



Yet, while these words were still leaving the lips of Jesus, He saw the torches in the distance, He heard the tread of many feet on the stony pathway, He knew that the had already come, so He immediately aroused His sleeping friends, "Get up! Let us be going! Behold he who betrays Me draws near!" <sup>23)</sup>

We must now retrace our steps a moment and bring Judas with his band from the temple to the Garden. During the meal Judas had left the group and kept his rendezvous with the priests. As noted before, he probably had made some agreements with them at the time when he purchased the lamb and brought it to the temple for levitical inspection. Since the exact place at which the last meal would be eaten was withheld from him by Jesus' unique procedure for preparation, <sup>24)</sup> his first plans were probably foiled, namely, to inform the priests where Jesus would keep the Passover. But with the meal still in progress he had hastened to his fellows in the crime and told them where they could find the man, whom they hated and despised, alone with just His eleven disciples. The priests hastily assembled an armed band. At this season of the year,

---

"Sleep on now, and take your rest! Why sleep ye? It is enough; behold" etc. (p. 412) This seems a bit strained. Since the words in St. Luke are so like those in St. Matthew and St. Mark after the first prayer, we maintain that they have no place in the final admonition because of content and position.

St. Augustine interprets these words almost as we: "Hence we may conclude that the case really stood thus: namely, that after addressing these words to them, 'Sleep on now, and take your rest,' the Lord was silent for a space. . . . Thus it is in Mark's Gospel we find those words . . . followed immediately by the phrase, 'It is enough;' that is to say, 'the rest which you have had is enough now.'" (Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, op. cit., III, iv, 11, p. 183.)

22) Mt. 26, 45.

23) Mt. 26, 46.

24) Cfr. Mt. 26, 17 - 19.



when there were many pilgrims in the land, it was natural that Pilate, the Roman Procurator, had an armed cohort, consisting of five or six hundred men, stationed at the temple, lest an outbreak find him unprepared. And so the high priests, after receiving the coveted information from Judas, hastened to Pilate or the captain in charge and begged of him a detachment of soldiers under a tribune to apprehend a dangerous criminal. These Roman soldiers<sup>25)</sup> along with some of the temple police, levites who served in such a capacity, made up the band which set out with Judas to take Jesus by surprise, while partaking of the Passover supper.

These preparations, however, had taken enough time so that Jesus had finished His meal and the conversation after the repast. When Judas and his men arrived at the scene of the Last Supper, they found them gone. But since it was customary for Jesus to spend His nights in the Garden of Gethsemane, Judas turned his steps toward the Mount of Olives. Yet with this move a new necessity arose. How would the men know which of the group in the Garden was Jesus? The evil-minded betrayer said that he would give them a sign, -- he would kiss the man, whom they wanted. And so they approached the spot, where we left Jesus speaking with His three disciples.

As this motley horde broke through the Garden gate and up the path, lighted by their smoking torches, Jesus stood waiting for them. He had been expecting their visit! With their approach He anticipated

---

25) It is not necessary to take the literal meaning for *στράτευμα*, "cohort," as used by St. John. That many soldiers would not be needed. St. John merely uses a metonymy, naming the small group after its larger division.



their plans, stepped forward, and asked, "Whom do you seek?" <sup>26)</sup> Taken off their guard, they replied, "Jesus of Nazareth." He countered with the answer, "I am He!" And with these words they reeled backward and fell to the ground. And again He asked them, after they had regained their composure, "Whom do you seek?" They repeated their reply, "Jesus of Nazareth." And Jesus said, "I have told you that I am He. If then you seek Me, let these go away." With this the words of the High Priestly Prayer were fulfilled, that of those which had been given to Him, He had lost none. <sup>27)</sup>

At this time Judas stepped out from among the captors and walked toward Jesus. <sup>28)</sup> Though the preceding events had really made his action unnecessary, he determined to carry out his end of the bargain. He walked up to Jesus and said, "Hail, Master," <sup>29)</sup> and kissed Him tenderly. Feeling deeply the hypocrisy of this act, the Master answered, "Friend, for what have you come?" <sup>30)</sup> How those words should have cut

26) Jn. 18, 4 ff.

27) Cfr. Jn. 18, 9 and 17, 12.

28) We have placed the events, recorded by St. John, before those mentioned by the Synoptists for the following reasons: The time, in the first place, seems too short between the approach of the soldiers and the question of Jesus to permit the action of Judas. This scene would have taken several minutes to enact and by that time the surprise element in Jesus' bold question would have lost its edge. In the second place the remark, "And Judas also, who betrayed Him, stood with them," (Jn. 18, 5) seems to indicate that he had not stepped out from among their ranks, when nearing Jesus, but had remained with them during these first minutes. The relative clause, "who had betrayed Him," does not show that he had completed this act, but is rather technical name, given already in vs. 2.

29) Mt. 26, 49.

30) Mt. 26, 50. Meyer comments: "Da das Relat. 's' niemals in direkter Frage gebraucht wird, sondern nur in indirekter, so ist die gewöhnliche fragende Fassung unrichtig, und einen Missbrauch der sinkenden Gracitact anzunehmen, ist in Bezug auf 's' grundlos. . . Die Rede, der draengenden Situation entsprechend, ist abgebrochen: Freund, wozu du hier bist! naemlich: das thue. Damit weist Christus das geschehene



into the hard heart of the betrayer! But they apparently did no good, for again Jesus tried to instill shame and contrition into this cowardly wretch. "Judas, do you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?" <sup>31)</sup> Were they the spark that would kindle the flame? No, these tender words of the Lord did not drive Judas to the genuine penitence to which His look brought St. Peter later in the evening.

Immediately then, the men took hold of Jesus to lead Him away. But Peter, the impetuous, rashly tried to live up to his earlier bravado. He ripped his sword from its sheath and brazenly attempted to ward off the hands of the captors. In a wild swing he slashed off the right ear of one of the servants of the High Priest, whose name was Malchus. Instantly Jesus turned to Peter and rebuked him, saying, "Do not resist them, even to this extreme!" <sup>32)</sup> Then, after touching the injured ear with a healing hand, Jesus continued, "Peter, put back your sword into its place, for all those that take the sword will perish with the sword. Do you think that I am not able to call on My Father and that He will then place at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how may the scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be? The cup which the Father has given to Me shall I not drink it?" <sup>33)</sup>

---

verraetherische Kuessen von sich." (Meyer, H.A.W., op. cit., pp. 521. 522.) Though Meyer apparently has much in his favor, no less a Greek scholar than E.J. Goodspeed translates this sentence: "My friend, what are you here for?" (The Bible, an American Translation)

31) Lk. 22, 48.

32) Lk. 22, 51. St Augustine often has a very good commentary on just such puzzling phrases of Jesus. He offers here: "Let not what is about to take place agitate you. These men are to be suffered to go thus far; that is to say, so far as to apprehend Me, and thus to effect the fulfillment of those things which are written of Me." (Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, op. cit., III, v, 17, p. 185.)

33) Cfr. Mt. 26, 52 - 54; Jn. 18, 11.



Then looking up, Jesus saw the chief priests and elders with the captains of the temple guard, who by this time had worked toward the front of the mob to see what was causing the delay and additional commotion. He said to them, "Do you come out as against a robber, to take Me with swords and clubs? Did I not sit daily in the temple teaching, and you did not lay hold of Me. But this is your hour and the power of darkness. But thus it must be in order that the scriptures be fulfilled." <sup>35)</sup> After these words they took Him and led Him away.

The disciples, now stricken with awe, forgot their strong promises of loyalty and fled from their Master, leaving Him to His enemies. One man receives special mention. "And a certain young man was following Him, being clad in a fine linen cloth about his naked body, and they laid hold of him. But leaving behind the fine linen cloth, he fled naked." <sup>36)</sup> Since St. Mark is the only one recording this incident, we feel safe in naming this young disciple John Mark. After the Roman soldiers and the Jewish mob had left his father's house, where they first sought Jesus, he probably, though already in bed, quickly snatched a linen cloth, wrapped it about him, and hurried to the olive grove, where he could see what would transpire. Still curious, after the other disciples had fled, he hung close behind the captors of his Lord. When they noticed him, they attempted to arrest him too, but he fled, leaving the cloth in their hands, and hastened back

---

34) Meyer: "Luk. 22, 32 laesst auch schon die Oberpriester und Aeltesten mit erscheinen, was gewiss unrichtige Erweiterung der Ueberlieferung ist." (Meyer, H.A.W., op. cit., p. 521.) This is purely subjective. These men may have left after the armed group and, hence are not mentioned by the other writers. It would seem natural that these men would want to oversee the work of the evening, including the arrest.



to the city in his undergarments, or, as some believe, entirely naked.

Thus Jesus, bereft of His friends, was led, bound and guarded, to trial.

---

35) Cfr. Mt. 26, 55; Mk. 14, 48. 49; Lk. 22, 52. 53.

36) Mk. 14, 51. 52.



## II.

### BEFORE THE JEWISH COURTS

Many chapters have been written concerning the trials of Jesus Christ, as to whether they can be classed as truly legal or whether they were entirely unscrupulous, mere travesties of justice. There will probably never be a satisfactory solution, which is agreeable to all. Though we do have the traditional ordinances of the Jews, especially in the tractate of the Mishnah, called Sanhedrin, and though the Lex Romana is so well known to us today that it has been the pattern for many of the laws of our modern civilization, nevertheless, judgment on these grounds is very unstable. It must be remembered, first of all, that the traditional views of Jewish legal procedure "may represent rather the ideal than the real."<sup>1)</sup> And hence, though we may refer to these traditional ideas, it must be borne in mind that actual comparisons are a bit too risky. When, in the second place, we deal with Roman Law we

---

1) Edersheim, A., op. cit., p. 553. This view is likewise maintained by Charles Fiske and Burton Scott Easton: "A Jewish document (Sanhedrin) written in A.D. 225 is often quoted in illustration of Jesus' trial. Its evidence, however, must be used with great caution. It contemplates an independent Jewish court, bearing the responsibility for inflicting death, and so it provides safeguards that would have been needless in Jesus' day. Moreover, many of its rules are much later than New Testament times and represent rabbinic ideas of what should have been the law, not the actual practice of any period." (The Real Jesus, p. 180.) In a similar vein Shirley Jackson Case notes: "It is futile to attempt a reconciliation between the gospel stories of Jesus' trial and the legal processes of the Sanhedrin as detailed in the tractate of the Mishnah of this subject. This treatise is available in an excellent recent English translation by H. Danby. . . , who thinks that the Jewish criminal procedure here described is not that which was in vogue before 70 A.D. but is a projection into the past of ideas current among Jewish scholars at the end of the second century." (Jesus A New Biography, pp. 323. 324.)



must also remember that court trials in the provinces were in no way comparable to the drawn-out proceedings current in Rome.<sup>2)</sup> It was only the Roman citizen who could gain recourse to that legal protection, as St. Paul did before Festus.<sup>3)</sup> The long processes that then followed this appeal in Rome were not possible in the provinces, where the procurator held a more or less informal court, as the one presented to us in the gospels for the trial of Jesus. With these precautions in mind we then proceed.

Many theories are current as to the number of trials which Jesus had to endure. The view which we shall attempt to uphold is well summarized by the Rev. James Stalker, "There were two trials, an ecclesiastical one and a civil one, in each of which there were three stages. The former took place, first before Annas, then before Caiaphas and an informal committee of the Sanhedrin, and, lastly, before a regular meeting of this court; the latter took place, first before Pilate, then before Herod, and, lastly, before Pilate again."<sup>4)</sup>

Accordingly then, Jesus was led first into the presence of

---

2) "Numerous writers have claimed that the trial of Christ before Pilate was illegal, because Pilate did not conduct the case in accordance with the legal procedure followed in the city of Rome. Much evidence has been collected of late, however, especially from the Papyri found in Egypt, to prove that in the provinces of the Roman Empire capital cases were not conducted at any time in the leisurely and formal manner in which they were carried on at Rome. A governor visited a part of his province for a few days at a time, and heard and rapidly disposed of numerous cases. . . . So far as we can now judge, the trial of Jesus before Pilate was quite in accord with legal procedure in the Roman provinces." (Barton, G.A., Jesus of Nazareth, A Biography, p. 379.)

3) Cfr. Acts 25, 10. 4) Stalker, J., The Life of Jesus Christ, p.127.



Annas, the father-in-law of the present high priest. This man also had held that high ecclesiastical position from the years 7 - 14 A.D., when he was deposed by Valerius Gratus, the predecessor of Pontius Pilate. That this man wielded a strong influence over the religious affairs of the Jews of his day can be learned from the fact that one of his sons had been high priest before Caiaphas, the present high priest and his son-in-law, and four of his sons succeeded this high priest to that high position of honor. But since the more religious Jews considered the high priesthood as a life-time position, they naturally still looked upon this Annas as their rightful high priest, even though the secular government changed these men about at will. Thus we find Annas mentioned as high priest, along with Caiaphas, in the beginning of St. Luke's gospel.<sup>5)</sup> In deference to this popular feeling and in order to give Caiaphas more time for assembling a small group of the Sanhedrin, Jesus is brought first to Annas, also termed in St. John's Gospel the high priest.

The most logical assumption is that Annas shared the high priest's palace with his son-in-law, the one occupying the quarters on one side of the open court, the other lodging on the opposite side. This seems to be the most natural view, because St. John reports that St. Peter gained admittance into the "palace of the high priest."<sup>6)</sup> And this same writer divides the denial into two parts, one occurring during the trial before Annas, the other while Jesus stood before Caiaphas and the council. The fact that the place of the trials before the Jews is mentioned but once, and that at the beginning, and the fact that Jesus saw St. Peter after the third denial, necessitating that, had Jesus been

---

5) Cfr. Lk. 3, 2.

6) Jn. 18, 15.



transferred to another place, St. Peter also must have changed locations with Jesus, something which is not hinted in the text, while the very opposite is suggested by the continuity of events in regard to St. Peter in the other three gospels, --- these two facts lead us to believe that the trials before Annas and Caiaphas took place in the same building. 7)

That Jesus was brought to a residence of Annas, which was on the Mount of Olives, 8) seems groundless in the light of what follows. The time element alone would seem to indicate that all these meetings were held in close proximity and in quick succession. The time allotted to these various processes could only be from around one o'clock in the morning of the fifteenth of Nisan, since the Passover meal would end

---

7) Edersheim feels that "the suggestion that Annas and Caiaphas occupied the same dwelling is not only very unlikely in itself, but seems incompatible with the obvious meaning of the notice, 'Now Annas sent Him bound unto Caiaphas the High-Priest.'" (op. cit., p. 548.) To maintain this view, he places the conversation given by St. John as taking place before Caiaphas, and therefore concludes: "We thus know absolutely nothing of what passed in the house of Annas -- if, indeed, anything passed -- except that Annas sent Jesus bound to Caiaphas." (ibid.) We see no reason for disrupting St. John's narrative in that manner. The fourth evangelist does not report on the proceedings before Caiaphas, because these events are already given in the other three gospels. Here, again, St. John acts as the supplement. We, therefore, follow the sequence suggested by St. John, as being the most obvious and logical.

8) "They [i.e., the high priests of the house of Annas] had a country-seat, probably on the Mount of Olives, where they drove a lucrative traffic in doves and all the materials for the offerings of purification; and the place was known, apparently in derision, as the Booths of the Sons of Annas. . . It is probable that he [Annas] resided at the Booths on the slope of Olivet hard by the Garden of Gethsemane, and thither Jesus was conducted." (Smith, D., The Days of His Flesh, p. 464.) This assumption is based on this sentence in the Talmud: "And there is also another Boraitha: Forty years before the Temple was destroyed, the Sanhedrin was exiled from the chamber of the Temple to a store." (Babylonian Talmud, p. 121.) There will be further explanation on this passage in foot-note 11).



just before midnight,<sup>9)</sup> until about five that morning, for it is said that Jesus was brought before Pilate at day-break.<sup>10)</sup> Still another reason might suggest that the trials of Jesus be kept within one building, namely, secrecy. During these festive seasons the streets were not empty of people, for they were preparing for the feast days to come, even at this early hour. If Jesus were paraded from palace to palace, a crowd would soon follow, which the leaders would choose to avoid, lest the mob impede the swiftness of their judicial machinery. Therefore, since it appears evident that Jesus was not moved any great distance to and from the various trials and since we have evidence that the Sanhedrin met in the palace of the high priest,<sup>11)</sup> we will hold to our

---

9) Cfr. Ex. 12, 22.

10) Cfr. Mt. 27, 1. 2; Mk. 15, 1; Lk. 22, 66; 23, 1; Jn. 18, 28.

11) "This second sitting of the Sanhedrin was held, like the first, in the pontifical palace, for they started from Caiaphas' residence when bringing Jesus before the Pretorium (John 18, 28). The ordinary place for their assemblies was the basilica erected by Simon ben-Shetach near the Israelites' Porches, and known by the name of Gazith (Hall of hewn or square Stones). But the Jewish traditions inform us that, forty years before the destruction of the Temple, the Sanhedrin, bereft of their powers of sentencing prisoners to death, abandoned Gazith and held their meetings in the Gentiles' Porches, and still later on in the lower town (Talmud of Babylon, Roschaschana, 31, 1; Talmud of Jerusalem, Yoma, 13, 3; Sanhedrin, 24, 2). So three years before the Saviour's Passion the Great Council had ceased to have any fixed place for their meetings." (Fouard, the Abbe Constant, The Christ The Son of God, pp. 285. 286.) Furthermore Edersheim connects the meeting place of the Sanhedrin with the Booths of the Sons of Annas, which were mentioned before: "The highest tribunal was that of seventy-one, or the Great Sanhedrin, which met first in one of the Temple-Chambers, the so-called Lishkath haGazith -- or Chamber of Hewn Stones -- and at the time of which we write in 'the booths of the sons of Annas.'" To which a foot-note is appended: "It is a mistake to identify these with the four shops on the Mount of Olives. They were the Temple-shops previously described." (op. cit., p. 554.) Therefore we rule out the contentions of David Smith and Shirley Jackson Case in placing the meeting place of the Sanhedrin in the Hall of Hewn Stone, as being untenable for the above-cited reasons.



first proposition, unless proof to the contrary is forthcoming.

We have now brought Jesus to the palace of the high priest, located in Jerusalem. It is St. John alone, who brings us this information. Since he reports his account, as one who was an eye witness, it seems most tenable to identify him with the one, merely referred to as "another disciple." <sup>12)</sup> And because this disciple is one who "was known to the high priest," <sup>12)</sup> St. John alone of Jesus' intimates appears to merit such an honor. Some have suggested Lazarus, but that would fall in this case, since the raising of Lazarus from the dead had so invoked the displeasure of the Jewish rulers that they called a special meeting. <sup>13)</sup> This would brand Lazarus a persona non grata in the eyes of the elders and scribes. Hence in want of better evidence we look to St. John for the events, which occurred before Annas. <sup>14) 15)</sup>

This trial before the former high priest appears on the surface to be but a formality. Perhaps we may see in this brief interrogatory session an echo of the words of Nicodemus, which he uttered before

---

12) Cfr. Jn. 18, 15.

13) Cfr. Jn. 11, 47 ff.

14) We pass over the subjective reasoning of Strauss without comment: "Now it was the more obvious for the later Evangelist on an occasion on which the High Priest was supposed to have something to do, as on the trial and condemnation of Jesus, to give that other (supposed) High Priest something really to do, as he thus had an opportunity at the same time of representing Jesus as having been repudiated and maltreated by two Jewish High Priests; as Luke, conversely, but with a similar purpose, represents him as having been found innocent by two judges, neither of them belonging to the Jewish hierarchy, that is by Herod as well as Pilate." (op. cit., p. 346.)

15) "When we read in John xviii. 13, that they 'led Him away to Annas first,' ~~and~~ the high priest mentioned in ver. 19 can be no other than Annas himself, and, in the light of the statement in ver. 24, -- 'Annas had sent Him bound unto Caiaphas,' -- the presence of Caiaphas during the previous proceedings becomes almost unimaginable." (Steinmeyer, F.L., op. cit., p. 95.)



the Jewish rulers on a former occasion, when they attempted to apprehend Jesus, "Does our law judge a man, unless it hears first from him and knows what he does?" <sup>16)</sup> That then was probably the reason for the questions of Annas, mere concession to the forms of law, for he asked, Jesus "concerning His disciples and His teaching." <sup>17)</sup> And Jesus answered him in all truth, "I have spoken openly to the world; I taught always in the synagogue and in the temple, where all the Jews convene, and in secret I have said nothing. Why do you ask Me? Ask those who have heard what I have spoken to them." And then, so the next words seem to suggest, Jesus nodded to the captors, standing about, and added, "See, these know what I have said." This latter statement provoked one of the officers of the temple guard, for he slapped Jesus and demanded, "Is that the way to answer the high priest?" But Jesus with a justified reproach queried, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil! But if well, why do you slap Me?" Thus the initial, so to say, preliminary trial was begun. And now Jesus was led from the chamber of Annas, still bound and with a guard, across the open court to the chamber of Caiaphas, the high priest.

A short distance behind the soldiers and Jews that brought Jesus to Annas two disciples, Peter and John, hovered in the darkness. They had come to see what would become of their Master, after the first fright had worn off. Upon reaching the palace of the high priest John immediately entered, for he was known at the gate, but Peter, a stranger among so many enemies, did not cross the threshold. When the former noticed that his partner was no longer at his side, he hurried back to the door, and seeing Peter without, gave the janitoress a few words of

---

16) Jn. 7, 51.

17) The following from Jn. 18, 13 - 23.



assurance and brought his friend into the palace proper.

Within these very walls, where his Lord was standing trial for His life, this Peter would commit a sin, which probably caused him to wish many times that he had never entered that door. During the next few hours he was to do the very thing, which but a few hours previous he confidently denied. He was himself to denounce the very Lord, whom he boldly told, "If I must die with You, not will I deny You!"<sup>18)</sup> but the words of Jesus proved more trustworthy, "Verily I say to you that you, today, this night, will deny Me three times before the cock crows twice."<sup>19)</sup> And so it happened.

While Jesus was being questioned before Annas Peter, so St. John tells us, fell twice before the taunts of the Jewish by-standers. The exact wording of these denials, at first glance, might be difficult to ascertain from the four gospel accounts. Because of this negative scholars immediately brand everything fictitious.<sup>20)</sup> They forget that if the evangelists did attempt to pass a forgery, they would have been very weak-minded men to leave such apparent differences stand! The ideal then would have been to state each denial in the exact words so that the three wordings would have been exact duplicates in the four gospels.

---

18) Mt. 26, 35.

19) Mk. 14, 30.

20) "That the narrators are only concerned with the triple denial, in accordance with the prophecy of Jesus, we see by the discrepancies which they admit in reference to persons, place and circumstances." (Strauss, D., op. cit., p. 345.) But we find a sound solution of this difficulty in the work of J. A. Broadus and A. Robertson: "If Peter's denials ran through all three stages of the trials before the Jews . . . then no one of the four Gospels could give each of the denials precisely at the time of its occurrence; and so each Gospel merely throws them together, as in another way we here bring them together in one section. There is no difficulty about the substantial fact



They were shrewd men to so dupe the world for nineteen hundred years in they face of such indiscretions!

The three denials of Peter were not, if we take the gospel accounts into consideration, three distinct sentences of Peter by which he denied his Lord, but they were three different occasions when, confronted by various people in the open court-yard or on the porch, Peter claimed with the audacity that was truly his that he was not one of the disciples of this Jesus.

The first of these denials occurred soon after he had passed through the gate. St. John, better acquainted with the interior of the palace, immediately lost Peter in the crowd and made his way slowly toward the rooms of Annas. St. Peter was passing by the janitoress at the door, when she exercised her authority she asked, probably attempting to safeguard against any attempt to "pack" the house in favor of Jesus, who had probably been brought in through that very door but a few minutes before, "You aren't one of this man's disciples, are you?"<sup>21)</sup> Peter, taken off guard, yet wishing "to see the end,"<sup>22)</sup> blurted out, "I am not!"<sup>23)</sup> He then made his way toward the fire of coals, which the

---

of the denials: and we must be content with our inability to arrange all the circumstances into a complete programme." (Harmony of the Gospels, p. 193.)

21) We offer this translation because of the fact that the question, as introduced in the Greek (cf. Kaegi, 207, 3), demands a negative answer. If it were just a jibe, directed against Peter, the janitoress would have wanted a positive answer. In accord with the duties of the door-keeper and the time elapsing between St. Peter's entrance and the ensuing query it seems as if this is the best interpretation. St. John was probably not suspected by the woman, because of his standing, just as Nicodemus remained a silent disciple, though a member of the ruling party. (Cfr. Jn. 7. 50. 51)

22) Mt. 26, 58.

23) This conversation was taken from Jn. 18, 17. It is very likely that the reason why this account is found only in St. John's gospel is



servants and officers had made in the court, for these early spring nights in Palestine were damp and cool. But there he found no haven, for this janitoress, still determined to ascertain his true identity, followed close behind and, hoping to gain further information, said in front of the very men, who had just brought Jesus in from the Garden, "You were too with Jesus of Nazareth!" But he quickly answered, continuing in his first lie, "I do not know, nor do I understand what you are saying!" And then in order to find relief from this constant cross-examination Peter made his way toward the porch, where the first cock-<sup>24)</sup> crow, before the break of dawn, was audible. This constitutes the first denial of St. Peter.

But on the porch he found no relief either, for the maid at the door had quickly spread her suspicion to other maids. There he was confronted again by the taunt of a woman, spreading her gossip to those present, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth." But Peter, not to be caught unaware, snapped back, this time with an oath, "I do not know the<sup>25)</sup> man!" But one of the soldiers, recognizing Peter, definitely added, "Indeed, you are one of them!" Yet Peter, bolder than ever, exclaimed, "Man, I am not!"<sup>26)</sup> Unable to stay there any longer Peter turned his steps toward the fire within the court once more. He had now denied his Lord twice.

For about an hour he stood there unmolested.<sup>27)</sup> During this

---

because he may have overheard these words of Peter as he walked ahead of him.

24) We have followed St. Mark's gospel for this account, though St. Lk. and St. Mt. are so close as to be almost identical. St. Mk., however, has a bit more detail, which would seem very natural since he later became the protege of St. Peter, who assisted him in writing his gospel. Cfr. Eusebius, Church History, III, xxxix.



time Jesus had been questioned by Annas and by now Caiaphas had practically completed his first session with Him. The "other apostle" had probably quit the chamber by then, seeing how the verdict would be cast, and making his way through the court-yard once more, was able to overhear these last words of Peter. Some of the men standing about the fire, noticed from Peter's dress or possibly some remarks he had made that he was a Galilean. They asked, "You aren't also one of his disciples?" Again he denied and said, "I am Not!" But one of the servants, who was related to Malchus, the man whose ear Peter had injured in the Garden, added, "Didn't I see you in the Garden with Him?"<sup>28)</sup> And another, marking Peter's pronunciation, remarked, "Certainly you are one of them, for even your speech makes you conspicuous, as a Galilean."<sup>29)</sup> To which Peter replied in haste, "Man, I do not know what you are saying!"<sup>30)</sup> And he began to curse and to swear, saying, "I do not know this man of whom you speak!"<sup>31)</sup>

---

25) This has been taken from Mt. 26, 71. 72.

26) This section is found in Lk. 22, 58.

27) Lk. 22, 58: "about one hour having intervened".

28) These words have been taken from the fourth gospel, 18, 25. 26. Different from most commentaries, we have grouped both of the last two denials, reported by St. John, in the third denial. We are forced to do that because the other three gospels indicate the time elapsing between each denial, whereas St. John merely points to the interval of time, mentioned by the first three, by the placing of these words after the sending of Jesus to Caiaphas. Though this would seem to indicate that St. John has recorded but two occasions on which Peter denied his Lord, we find no difficulty there. St. John makes no mention that he has reported three denials. We must not try in the mechanical fashion to force the report of the writer into the pattern of the prophecy. The fourth gospel is still a supplement.

29) This latter question has been taken from Mt. 26, 73; Mk. 14, 70; Lk. 22, 59.

30) Lk. 22, 60.

31) Mk. 14, 71.



Then with the first glint of dawn came the second crowing of the cock. And about that time Jesus was being lead down from the council chamber of to be jeered at and mocked by the soldiery, before the final trial before the Sanhedrin, which took place soon after dawn.<sup>32)</sup> And glancing up, Peter met Jesus' eyes, eyes that were full of Pain and Sorrow. Imagine his thoughts! The entire conversation of the last evening flashed into Peter's mind. He remembered his braggadocio that he would never deny or leave his Master. All he could do was hide the flood of tears, welling within his eyes, and rush out into the gray light of morning. Peter, the Rock, had become Peter, the Denier!

But we must now return to Jesus, as He was brought before the hurriedly assembled council to be tried before Caiaphas, the high priest. Much ink has been spilled in trying to decide whether this trial was before the entire Sanhedrin and whether the trial itself was legal, since it was held at night, especially right before a high Feast. We shall not go into that problem. Nothing would be gained, nor would our conclusion be certain, for it is all guess-work. That this was an exceptional case and that the high priest was empowered in cases of necessity to act, even against traditional law, we have discussed in another part. Suffice it to say, this trial was probably very irregular,<sup>33)</sup> but not impossible in the light of what research has given us. We must agree with Dalman here: "The hair-splitting casuistry of Rabbinic Law would not have prevented a man like Caiaphas from executing something which the interest

---

32) Lk. 22, 66.

33) "Under the circumstances the meeting was most natural. Later Jewish traditional law forbade the night trial of a capital case, but there is no evidence that such a regulation was in existence in the time of Christ." (Barton, G.A., op. cit., p. 366.)



of the people and religion seemed to have demanded." 34)

The council before which Jesus was led was, so it seems, not the Great Sanhedrin, which consisted of seventy-one members, but rather a meeting of the smaller tribunal, which could consist of but twenty-three members, 35) which could have been easily called together, since the majority of the Sanhedrists would be in the city for the festival. This group was "presided over by the High Priest." 36) We can well imagine that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were among those missing, since they would not have sanctioned the conclusions of the trials.

Before this august body of the ruling classes of Palestine Jesus was tried. Yet the first attempt at convicting Him was brought to a checkmate. The councillors attempted to prove that Jesus was the Messiah by hearing the testimony of false witnesses. But, to their dismay, they could find no two that would agree, though this was a Mosaic necessity. 37)

---

34) Dalman, G., op. cit., p.99.

35) Cfr. Edersheim, A., op. cit., p. 554. In the Talmud we read "The Great (Sanhedrin) consisted of seventy-one, and the small of twenty-three." It is interesting to note, though, that for "a whole tribe, or a false prophet, or a high-priest, if they have to be judged for a crime which may bring capital punishment a court of seventy-one judges is needed." (Babylonian Talmud p. 2.) However, if the entire Sanhedrin were assembled, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea would have been present, since they were members of this larger council. That would not seem likely.

36) Dana, H. E., The New Testament World, p. 115. The Abbe Constant Fouard, however, claims: "Rightfully this function belonged to Rabben Gamaliel, who had held the presidency since the death of his father Simon; and without doubt he had been kept away designedly. A man of broader mind and sincerely attached to the doctrine of Hillel, his ancestor, like him he had broken clean away from the narrow and austere formalism of Shammai and the Scribes, while later on we even find him pleading the cause of the Christians. Such a man was not likely to be invited to the condemnation of Jesus. Accordingly the High-Priest assumed the direction of the trial himself. And, further than this, it was no unusual thing



Finally two came forward with witness that seemed to hold up. The one said: "This one says, 'I am able to tear down the Temple of God and within three days to build it up. ' 38) The other claimed: "We heard Him saying, 'I shall tear down this Temple, made with hands, and within three days I shall build another, made without hands.'" 39) But after further questioning even these two witnesses disagreed and hence cancelled the worth of their testimony. By this time Caiaphas was getting impatient. Things were not progressing, as he had anticipated. Before long it would be morning and all their haste and secrecy would be in vain. Their arch-enemy might still escape from their hands.

Since they were not able to prove from the words of witnesses that Jesus claimed Messiahship, Caiaphas decided on a plan of action. First he thought that he might trip Jesus into some sort of confession, so he asked, "Do you answer nothing? What is it that these witness against you?" 40) But Jesus saw behind the chicanery of this cunning priest, hence he answered nothing. He was under no obligation, for they had failed in their case against Him. He should have been freed without any further attempt at a trial.

But Caiaphas was far from through. If he could not worm an ans-

---

for the pontiffs to reserve this right to themselves, especially in any cases where the worship of Jehovah was in question." ( op. cit., p. 275.)  
We could not find evidence for this fact!

37) Cfr. Dt. 17, 6.

38) Mt. 26, 61.

39) Mk. 14, 58.

40) Mk. 14, 60.



wer from Jesus, he would demand one. Once more he addressed the prisoner with tones that rang through the meeting room, for by his mein all must have realized that now the crucial moment had come. Silence hung over the chamber like a pall for each was eager to hear if the Priest would ask that most important question. He did, with the words, "I adjure you by the living God that you tell us whether You are the Christ, the Son of God!"<sup>41)</sup> No sooner had the words left the lips of Caiaphas, when Jesus<sup>42)</sup> quit His silence with the majestic words, "You have said it! I am!" Jesus then looked forward to the end of time and quoted in prophetic vision a verse from Daniel, "Verily, I say to you, 'From now on, you will see the Son of Man, sitting on the right hand of power and coming in the clouds of heaven.'<sup>43)</sup>"

That was the answer Caiaphas had been waiting for! Now they had sufficient evidence to convict Him of claiming Messiahship. He, therefore, in righteous indignation, though nothing more than cant, exclaimed, "He has blasphemed! What need have we yet for witnesses? Behold, now you have

---

41) Mt. 26. 63.

42) The answers of Jesus, taken from Mt. 26, 64. and Mk. 14, 62. are the natural construction for an answer in the positive in Aramaic. Since there is no difference in form in a sentence whether declarative or interrogative, Jesus just answers that what Caiaphas has said is His answer. In regard to this answer Steinmeyer holds that "it is not necessary, nor is there any occasion to magnify the answer of Jesus to the question of the highpriest, so as to give it the character of a modified oath. . . . The assumption of an oath is not justified by the circumstances of the case." (Steinmeyer, F. L., *op. cit.*, p. 103) However, we cannot see how the statement of Caiaphas can be overlooked. It is evident that this is couched in the form of an oath, therefore, the answer, whether stated or not, is given in answer to this oath and hence is given under oath. The same procedure is followed in our courts today. One oath, before ascending to the witness chair, suffices to place the man under oath for all his subsequent answers.

43) Mt. 26, 64 and Dan. 7, 13, 14.



heard the blasphemy! What do you think?" And with these words he tore his garments to signify that the name of God had been used in vain. The entire council answered, "He is guilty of death!"<sup>44)</sup>

Then bedlam broke loose. They had accomplished what they had set out to do. Their victim was ripe for the plucking. He had fallen in to their trap! They began to mock Him, whom they hated. How long they had harbored those thoughts within their bosoms! Now they could give vent to those inner yearnings! The more sedate members of the council probably did not join in such ribald sport. They had more important matters to attend to. Jesus had been convicted by an ecclesiastical court. But this verdict would not sentence Him in the secular court of Pontius Pilate. Accordingly Caiaphas and his henchmen, at this time, gathered together in some corner and plotted and planned their procedure before the Roman Procurator, while Jesus was left to the mocking of the servants.

After the exit of the fulers and scribes the servants naturally would take Jesus down to their haunts in the courtyard. It was at this time that Jesus saw Peter at the final stage of his denials. And that one look from the eyes of the Master sent that disciple out into the streets weeping. But the scene that was to follow would bring tears to the eyes of any true disciple of Jesus of any time or clime. There they capitalized on His claims of Messiahship. They spit in His face; they slapped Him. Finally they blindfolded Him, and smiting Him in the face asked, "Prophecy!<sup>45)</sup> Who is the one striking You?" But we hasten over this scene which must have lasted until the first faint rays of the morning sun heralded the dawn of the high day, the fifteenth of Nisan.

---

44) These words have been taken from Mr. 26, 65. 66.

45) Lk. 22, 64.



We now look to St. Luke's gospel for the events before the final ushering of Jesus to Pilate. That there was a second, brief meeting of the Sanhedrin just prior to the first stage of the Roman trial seems very self-evident from the third gospel. The report of St. Luke fits in perfectly with our placing of the final denial of Peter just as the servants were bringing Jesus down into the court after the judgment by Caiaphas and the Jewish councillors. After describing the scene, where Jesus looked upon Peter, causing the heinousness of his sin to well up in all its blackness and drive him into solitude, this evangelist tells of the mockery of Jesus at the hands of these Jewish scullions. Following this, he states the time, "and when it had become day," <sup>46)</sup> and continues to describe a brief trial. <sup>47)</sup> That our contention is not a stretching of the facts is brought out by the fact that both St. Matthew and St. Mark hint at another convocation of the chief priests and elders, just before setting out for Pilate. And the very proceedings themselves, the answer of Jesus and the different order of the questions, suggest a second trial.

But why would such a trial be necessary? Why, just an hour or so

---

46) Lk. 22, 66.

47) Steinmeyer holds the opposite view: "The assumption of certain expositors, that in the early morning Jesus was subjected to a second trial before Caiaphas, is, however, entirely erroneous. This has been assumed because the unquestionable identity of the two passages, Luke xxii. 66 - 71 and Matt. xxvi. 62 - 65, has been overlooked, and because the indefinite notification of time given by the third evangelist: 'as soon as it was day' (Luke xxii. 66), has been taken in too rigid a sense." (Steinmeyer, F.L., op. cit., pp. 106. 107.) Edersheim also agrees with him: "... A careful consideration of what passed there obliges us to regard the report of St. Luke as referring to the night-meeting described by St. Matthew and St. Mark." (op. cit., p. 560.)



later, another set of questions, so parallel to the first group? This was probably due to a technicality in Jewish law. Ludwig remarks, "According to the law, a death sentence must be discussed one day, and confirmed the next." <sup>48)</sup> Therefore, to give this trial a semblance of legality the Sanhedrin assembled immediately after dawn, pretending that this was the day after their former trial, and went through practically the same procedure that they pursued in the trial of that early morning after the arrest. As to just how many of the Sanhedrin members were present again, we would not venture a guess. This may have been, and likely was, just the smaller group again, that had met before. Even this council, with less than one third the members of the Great Sanhedrin, had power to act on capital cases. <sup>49)</sup>

Speed was the requisite of this trial. Upon assembling, they asked Jesus the crucial question of the night before, "If You are the Christ, tell us!" And then Jesus answered, in an entirely different manner than in the previous trial, "If I tell you, you will not believe. But if I ask, you wont answer." Certainly this remark of Jesus presupposes that He had answered this very question once before. He recalled that on the night

---

48) Ludwig, E., op. cit., p. 285. This is seconded by David Smith, who cites Lightfoot, "Lesser cases might be concluded on a single day, but in capital cases, while sentence of absolution was pronounced on the same day, it was required that sentence of condemnation should be delayed until the day following." (op. cit., p. 472.) The Abbe Constant Fournier also writes: "There were certain prescriptions, wise as they were humane, which ordered that the judges should observe a fast, not pronouncing sentence until after mature consideration, and in cases of capital offense they must even defer decision until at least one day after the examination. (op. cit., p. 287.) A. Edersheim agrees also: "He might be pronounced 'not guilty' on the same day on which the case was tried; but a sentence of 'guilty' might only be pronounced on the day following that of the trial." (op. cit., p. 555.)

49) Cfr. Edersheim, A., op. cit., p. 554. The Talmud mentions that for "crimes (which may bring capital punishment) . . . twenty-three are needed." (Babylonian Talmud p. 2.)



previous, when He professed that He was the Messiah, they only mocked and rebuked Him. This answer alone should prove conclusively that this trial, reported by St. Luke, could not be the same one that is recorded by the first two evangelists. And then again Jesus added a bit of prophecy, similar to His former answer: "From now on the Son of Man will be seated on the right hand of the power of God." 50)

Not satisfied with this answer, since it was not definite enough for their purpose, they continued, "Then You are the Son of God?" And again Jesus gave them the pointed answer, "You have said it, I am!" That was the answer they desired. Upon hearing those words they exclaimed, "What need do we have yet for witnesses? For we ourselves have heard it from His own mouth!" 51) And with that this short session was brought to a close.

Jesus had been tried by the Jewish rulers. They had received the answer from Him that He was the Messiah. They took this for blasphemy and therefore pronounced Him guilty of death. Jewish law had been satisfied, so that all that remained was to convince Pilate of the guilt of the convicted Jesus.

---

50) This passage reminds us of both Dan. 7, 13 and Psalm 110, 1.

51) This conversation has all been taken from Lk. 22, 67 - 71.



### III.

#### BEFORE THE ROMAN COURTS

Pontius Pilate was governor of Palestine from 26 to 36 of our era. Had it not been for the events of this morning of the fifteenth of Nisan his name would have gone down in history unsung, as did those of his four predecessors. But the fact that he acted as the official judge of the Roman state in this trial of Jesus Christ has earned for him the contempt of all the world. Yet in heaping upon this man all the blame for the death of Jesus, due to his cowardly tactics in the practice of justice, we would do well to pause a moment and ponder the words of the German theologian, Karl Barth, "Pontius Pilate, the redoubtable, or perhaps not so very redoubtable, procurator of the Roman Emperor, who finds Jesus innocent but yet condemns Him to death, is only the mouthpiece of the world which now says what Jesus Himself said before: 'The Son of Man must suffer!'"<sup>1)</sup>—  
In each of us there is a Pilate!

It was to this man that Jesus was brought by the Jewish rulers, since they were not able to inflict the death penalty, this permission having been taken away from them just a year or two before.<sup>2)</sup> So it was early in the morning when they brought Jesus to the Roman, perhaps about five o'clock.

---

1) Barth, Karl, Credo, p.77.

2) It is interesting to see how the negative critic, Brandes, in trying to palliate his people, uses this point to pardon the Jews and, at the same time, to point to the Bible as being in error. "A new reader of the Bible would, for instance, be startled by the fact that the crucifixion of Jesus, if it ever took place, could be laid at the door of the Jews then living. For it is a proved fact, after all, that the Jews inhabiting the Palestine of those days had no legal jurisdiction whatsoever." (Brandes, G., op. cit., p. 27.)



He, as it would seem, had been notified that a notorious criminal would be brought to the bar of justice at an early hour and so we find him waiting in the Hall of Judgment. As to just where this Pretorium was located, nothing definite can be said. We have two possible locations and supporters for both. During the feast days, when Pilate visited Jerusalem, he either resided at the fortress of Antonia, which was adjacent to the temple,<sup>3)</sup> or at the old royal palace of Herod.<sup>4)</sup>

These religious leaders of the Jews, so St. John informs us, would not enter the residence of Pilate, since he was a Gentile. If they would, they would have been ceremonially unclean and could not "eat the Passover,"<sup>5)</sup> which in this case referred to the festive meal, the Chagigah, which was eaten on the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread after the morning sacrifice.<sup>6)</sup> Hence we find Pilate forced to come out to the Jews to ask, "What charge do you bring against this man?"<sup>7)</sup> This was the very question which the Jewish rulers had wished Pilate would not ask. They hoped that he would condemn Jesus on the strength of their trial of the night before and, therefore, answered, "If this man were not an evil doer, we would not have handed Him over to you."<sup>8)</sup> But Pilate, whose love for the Jews had never been great, gloated in throwing back the jibe, "You take Him, and judge Him according to your law!"<sup>9)</sup> But the Jews had to confess, though it pained their pride, "We are not permitted to put anyone to death."<sup>10)</sup> And so their first plan was thwarted.

---

3) "... During the Paschal-tide, Pilate resided in Antonia, the fortress erected north of the Temple and overlooking the porches." (Fouard, the Abbe C., op. cit., p. 301.)

4) "Although it is impossible to speak with certainty, the balance of probability is entirely in favour of the view that, when Pilate was



But these crafty councillors had prepared for even this emergency. They had cast their first charge of the morning into a political mold, since a religious charge, as decided upon by the two meetings of the Sanhedrin, would find no place in Roman law. "Injuries to the gods are the affair of the gods," was the Roman legal maxim.<sup>11)</sup> Therefore we find the charge, now expanded into three indictments, twisted, so as to give it a secular flavor.<sup>12)</sup> St. Luke tells us what these three charges are. "We found Him perverting our nation, forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ the king."<sup>13)</sup> Upon hearing these indictments the Roman judge returned into the judgment hall, where Jesus had been taken, as St. John tells us in more detail. He asked Him, "Are You the king of the Jews?" Jesus replied, in order to understand in what sense he meant those words, "Do you say this of yourself, or did others tell you this concerning Me?" But Pilate, somewhat irritated, snapped back, "Am I a Jew? Your people and the priests brought You to me. What have You done?" Then Jesus replied with those oft-quoted words, which so succinctly epitomize His entire mission on earth, which is often lost sight of today, "My kingdom is not of this world: If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight that

---

in Jerusalem with his wife, he occupied the truly royal abode of Herod, and not the fortified barracks of Antonia." (Edersheim, A., op.cit., p. 566.) J. Klausner also agrees: "When Pilate came to Jerusalem to be present during the time of Passover he did not live in the Citadel of Antonia, but, according to the evidence of Josephus, in the Palace of Herod. . . ." (op. cit., pp. 345. 346.)

- 5) Jn. 18, 28.      6) Cfr. p. 27.      7) Jn. 18, 29.      8) Jn. 18, 30.  
9) Jn. 18, 31.      10) Jn. 18, 31.  
11) Easton, B.S., and Fiske, C., op. cit., p. 185.



I should not be handed over to the Jews, but now is My kingdom not from hence." By this time the Roman was becoming impatient over the vagueness of Jesus' answers. And so in a pointed question, which is given by all four gospels, he asked Him, "Are You not a king then?" And Jesus answered bravely, "You say that I am a king [the Aramaic form for a positive answer] ! I was born for this purpose and I came into the world for this purpose, in order that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice." But Pilate, skeptic that he was, having feasted on the husks of pagan philosophy at Rome, inquired with a sneer without awaiting an answer, "What is truth?" Then returning to the Jews with Jesus, he announced, "I find no guilt in Him." 14)

But at this proclamation of innocence the shouts broke out anew all through the vast crowd, which by this time had gathered outside the Pretorium. At the instigation of the ring leaders the people accused Him of all manner of crimes. They shouted their voices hoarse. But during this entire display of the anger and malice of the Jewish populace, Jesus remained silent. In fact Pilate was astonished at His composure. He finally asked Him, "Do you have nothing to answer? See how many things they say against You!" 15) But Jesus remained silent, so that Pilate had to marvel at the bearing of the man under such a barrage of accusations.

---

12) "That Jesus was put to death by order of the Roman Procurator is certain; there is no trace of his having given immediate or personal offence to that officer by his ministry; there is, therefore, every probability in favour of the representation given by our Gospels, that the Jewish authorities being themselves deprived of the power of life and death by the Romans, endeavored to gain over the Roman Procurator for their purposes, by bringing the man whom they wished to destroy into suspicion with the Romans on political grounds." (Strauss, D., op. cit., p. 256.) Here we can agree with Strauss!

13) Lk. 23, 2.

14) These last quotations have been taken from Jn. 18, 33 - 38.



This had Pilate perplexed for a moment. He did not know just what to do next. As he hesitated, pondering his next move, he heard one of the men cry out, "He stirs up the people, by teaching through all Judea, even beginning from Galilee, down to this place." <sup>16)</sup> Upon hearing the word "Galilee," Pilate determined to rid himself of this case or at least gain further information by sending Jesus to Herod Antipas, who also had come down to Jerusalem for the Feast. Herod had jurisdiction in Galilee, hence Pilate mused that he might know all about this man.

Whether Herod could actually try Jesus, while out of his territory, does not seem so likely, for those petty rulers were very jealous of their authority, even though it was limited by the hand of Rome. Some are of the opinion that Pilate merely desired to learn more about the case from Herod, who would know Jesus better, seeing Jesus spent much of His time in that part of Palestine. <sup>17)</sup> In this case, however, Pilate may have conceded his rights to Herod, for we learn that before this time the two men were at odds with each other, but this gesture on the part of Pilate calmed the troubled seas. It may be that their quarrel had been one of jurisdiction, and this concession of Pilate's was, so to say, a recognition of the sovereignty of Herod. But be that as it may, nothing came of the trip to Herod, as far as Jesus was concerned.

Herod, at first, was very glad to see Jesus. Since the murder of John the Baptist, Herod's conscience had been pricking him. Soon after

---

15) Mk. 15, 4.

16) Lk. 23, 5.

17) "This was not an attempt to transfer the cause to Herod; a case begun in a Roman court must be concluded there. Moreover, Herod had no



the perpetration of that bloody crime news came to Herod concerning another prophet, who was preaching similarly to John. He began to wonder. Could this man be John the Baptist, resurrected from the dead? Was he now coming to avenge himself? Pagan superstition was aroused in this Idumean prince. We can well imagine that he desired to see Jesus to convince himself that he was not a resuscitated John. Now was his opportunity.

Yet how different this man was from the vehement John, who had preached against his incestuous marriage with Herodias. Though the chief priests and scribes continued to malign Jesus and to cast all manner of vituperative remarks at Him, He held His peace. This was not a John the Baptist, so Herod thought. But what of the many miracles reported of this man? Perchance He would perform some wonder before Herod to gain his good graces. But here again the haughty Herod was mistaken. Jesus was not one to flaunt His powers to win the favors of royalty. So in the end this mock trial proved disgusting to the Galilean ruler.

To break this monotony and add to the meriment of the Feast Herod and his men of war ridiculed the silent prisoner. How long that lasted we are not told. That this entire procedure did not take long we may well suppose, for the entire trial of Jesus could not have consumed more than three hours. And so, satisfied that this man was harmless, Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate, after he had attired Him in a gorgeous robe.

Just what this final act of Herod's was to signify is quite an enigma. Many answers have been offered, but one is as good as the

---

jurisdiction in Jerusalem." (Fiske, C., & Easton, B.S., op.cit., p. 186.)



next. Some say that it was a white robe, <sup>18)</sup> thereby proclaiming the innocence of Jesus. <sup>19)</sup> Others have thought this to be a reference to the white robe of the Roman candidate for a political office, since Jesus aspired to the kingship of the Jews, so they thought. Still others maintain that this was just an added insult to Jesus, as was later the purple robe of the Roman soldiers. This seems to be the better and more certain significance of this garment.

Before entering into the final trial of Jesus it will be necessary to follow the steps of the Betrayer, Judas Iscariot, and see to what end he came. St. Matthew alone gives us the historical data surrounding his tragic end, though St. Peter alludes to this incident in an address before the other disciples, which St. Luke has included in his Acts of the Apostles. From these two sources we will choose our material.

On Friday morning, when it was a certainty that Jesus would

---

18) The Greek word given is λαμπρόν, which means "bright, shining, clear" and is at times used to refer to "whiteness," hence some men have referred this to the color of Jesus' garment here.

19) "What was this garment meant to travesty? Perhaps the consul's toga or that of the Roman candidates, thus disguising Jesus as though he were some puppet sovereign of the stage; or was it perhaps the garb assumed by Jews acquitted of capital offense, Herod indicating by this that he regarded the Prisoner as a fool, incapable of any crime? The Procurator appears to have interpreted it in this last sense, for, in arguing with the people for the life of the Christ, he urged in His defence this burlesque acquittal." (Fouard, the Abbe C., *op. cit.*, p. 302.) That Pilate later referred to just this item in announcing to the populace that Herod also had found no guilt in Jesus, cannot be maintained from the text. Had Herod shown any inclination toward convicting Jesus of some crime, the Jewish mob would not have waited long to remind Pilate of that fact. Therefore their very silence and presence again at the Pretorium were sufficient proof for Pilate that Herod had left the matter at exactly the same stage in the legal proceedings as he, when he sent Jesus to the prince.



be condemned, Judas finally realized what he had actually committed. The news had probably noised about the city, or perhaps he had remained near enough to the scenes of the action of that morning to know that Jesus was going to be put to death. The first thing the Betrayer did was to rush back to the men from whom he had received the thirty pieces of silver, which had now grown so odious to him, in an attempt to square himself with them.

We may conjecture that he returned to the temple at the time of the morning sacrifice, which was about nine o'clock, or, perhaps, a little later on this morning. Hurrying to the first group of priests which he met within the temple, he cried in despair, "I have sinned, having betrayed innocent blood!"<sup>20)</sup> But the hard-hearted priests, untouched by the cry of the desperate man, turned away contemptuously with the words, "What is that to us, you see to it!"<sup>21)</sup>

With those last words still searing his conscience, the man, with the burden of his sin resting heavily upon him, sought a last bit of comfort by returning the filthy coin which had bought his Master. It may be that he approached to the very door of the holy place and there cast the thirty pieces of silver at the very feet of the priests. Then rushing out of the temple and through the holiday crowd, whose very eyes seemed to pierce him through, he made his way for the outskirts of the city. Now whither? It is purely speculation. "Judas made his way up the acclivity which rises opposite Mount Sion, and came to a halt in a clay field belonging to a potter thereabouts. From this point his eye could sweep the whole pathway, along which he had last night dragged his Vic-

---

20) Mt. 27, 4.

21) ibid.



tim, from Gethsemane to the Pontiff's Palace; and, as he gazed, his mind gave way under the burthen of mad despair." 22) And there he "hanged himself." 23)

But what were the priests to do with the money, which Judas had so readily returned to them? According to Jewish law this money could not be turned into the sacred treasury, for it had been gained by unlawful means. The customary procedure, in such a case, was to return the money to the donor, or, if he wished, to purchase something with it for the common good. Such was the case here. Though these priests could not return this blood money to the rightful owner, they still could use it to purchase something in his name. They took this money and bought a field which often is thought to have been the very field on which the lifeless remains of this human wretch had fallen and where they buried him. Naturally they would want to cover up the reason for his death, hence the quicker the interment, the sooner the matter would be forgotten. It so happened that this field had belonged to a potter, from whom they probably bought it, and there they continued to bury the strangers who died in Jerusalem. Because of the shameful way in which this field became a cemetery for the forgotten it was later known as the Field of Blood.

When we compare these verses with St. Luke's account in the Acts, we find a few more details enumerated. Though this is not properly within our scope, we shall digress for a moment to show that nothing in that passage is in discord with the events in St. Matthew's

---

22) Fouard, the Abbe C., op. cit., p. 291.

23) Mt. 27, 5.



gospel, though the critics clamor that here is a real discrepancy. 24)

The only real point of difficulty in regard to the two accounts arises in regard to the purchasing of the potter's field. In the gospel it says that the priests bought the field, while in the Acts it ascribes the buying to Judas. St. Matthew's account gives the correct slant on the matter. It was the priests that bought the potter's field, but with Judas' money. In the final analysis the field belonged to the owner of the thirty pieces of silver, and that was Judas. And though he was now dead, the field still can be said to belong to him.

There is also another item that must be taken into consideration. In the narrative, described in the Acts, St. Peter was citing the case of the former disciple. As such he took the freedom of an orator and used this turn of words for the sake of emphasis. He told the brethren that Judas had been a disciple of Jesus, even as they, and had thus partaken of that glorious heritage of their Lord, the gospel ministry. But now he had fallen into gross sin. What had he gained in exchange for his former possession? --- a potter's field! That was the gain his sin had brought him. In that way St. Peter employed the word "purchased" in a metaphorical manner, a license we grant any speaker today.

That the second account states that Judas fell head down and

---

24) "Such is St. Matthew's story, and it bears the stamp of truth. The traitor's crime was awful in the eyes of the primitive Church, and it is in no wise surprising that his doom was early invested with lurid circumstances. In the Acts of the Apostles St. Luke reports the story which was current in his day." (Smith, D., op. cit., p. 474.)

"Now we already meet with this legend [the defection of Judas] in Mark, and it is taken over from him by the other evangelists, Matthew embellishing it with the tale of Judas hanging himself, and Luke in Acts with that of his bursting asunder." (Conybeare, F.C., op. cit., p. 137.)



burst asunder and makes no mention of the hanging <sup>25)</sup> itself is not surprising. St. Luke merely augments what was already known to his readers from the gospel of St. Matthew. Judas may have committed this dastardly deed, as we mentioned before, on the hillsides right outside of the city. It is not a happy thought, but still is apparently the one suggested by St. Luke, that the branch to which Judas made fast the rope that would end his misery, or even the branch itself, gave way under his weight so that his unconscious form was dashed to pieces on the rocks below, where the potter owned the field. Thus ends the life of Judas, the Betrayer.

St. Matthew concludes this account with a reference to the Old Testament. "And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him who was valued whom they valued of the sons of Israel, and they gave these for the field of the potter, as the Lord commanded me." <sup>26)</sup> St. Matthew states that this was a prophecy by Jeremiah which was fulfilled by this incident. But when we search for this passage in Jeremiah's prophecies, we seek in vain. We do find, however, a similar passage in Zechariah, but even there we must admit that the quotation is very free. <sup>27)</sup> Must we concede that St. Matthew is here guilty of a lapse of memory? No, that is not necessary, nor would it be fair to the holy writer. While writing this account the first evangelist has in mind both thoughts, the thirty pieces of silver and the potter. Since the latter thought is developed by Jeremiah <sup>28)</sup> to a far greater degree than in Zechariah,

---

25) In his eagerness to reconcile St. Matthew's and St. Luke's accounts Luther has rendered the verse in Acts in this manner: "Dieser hat ... sich erhenkt und ist mitten entzweigeborsten." However, the Greek *ἡρμήνευσε* does not seem to warrant such a rendering.

26) Mt. 27, 9. 10.

27) Zech. 11, 13.

28) Cfr. Jer. 18, 1 ff.



though this minor prophet alone mentions the thirty pieces of silver, we must think of St. Matthew as combining the two prophecies. That was a common practice at that time. "The Targums show us what liberties were taken, at this period, in paraphrasing the books of the Old Testament." 29) Saint Augustine also expresses this view in quite a picturesque language, making of all the prophets one large volume from which extracts were taken by St. Matthew, 30)

"How much more, then, is this a usage which might well be understood and most particularly commended to our attention in the case of the holy prophets, so that we might accept the books composed by the whole series of them, as if they formed but a single book written by one author, in which no discrepancy with regard to the subjects dealt with should be supposed to exist, as none would be found, and in which there would be a more remarkable example of consistency and veracity than would have been the case had a single individual, even the most learned, been the enunciator of all these sayings."

Thus St. Matthew chose from the book of the prophets various elements common to Jeremiah and Zechariah and gave them as from the pen of Jeremiah, since he was by far the more important. So again the charge of error fades into thin air.

We now return to the Pretorium, where the Jews have brought Jesus for the final trial in the Roman court. As Jesus stood before the Roman judge, we see Pilate's final attempts to free the prisoner, whom he is convinced is innocent. Though some would not subscribe to this last statement, it, nevertheless, remains true, when one surveys 31)

---

29) Fouard, the Abbe C., op. cit., p. 292.

30) Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, op. cit., III, vii, 30, p. 192.

31) "However probable therefore may be the Evangelical account, as to the mode in which the Jewish hierarchs contrived to gain the Roman procurator to their side, it is highly improbable in respect of all which



the vacillating and conciliating attempts of Pilate to satisfy both his sense of justice, perverted though it was, and the desires of the Jewish people, gathered before him.

His first step was to announce again the innocence of Jesus, as he had proclaimed it before and as even Herod in a tacit manner had confirmed it, after the chief priests, the rulers, and those people interested in these proceedings had been gathered once more at the pretorium. <sup>32)</sup> The judge spoke solemnly, "You have brought this man before me as one perverting the people, and lo, I have examined him before you and have found no guilt at all in this man of those things of which you accuse him, nor even Herod, for he returned him to us, and lo, nothing worthy of death is done to him." <sup>33)</sup> With those words of acquittal Pilate should have released Jesus as a guiltless man, and if necessary, given him an escort to protect his rights, if the mob should prove too dissatisfied. But not so this Roman. He tried to be diplomatic by giving in, just a bit, to the wishes of the people. He threw in this little sop,

---

they represent Pilate as saying or doing, in order to declare loudly and solemnly his conviction of the innocence of Jesus." (Strauss, D., op. cit., p. 357.) And again: "Certain it is, that the process of the condemnation of Jesus is here represented exactly in correspondence with the feelings of later Christendom, but scarcely with reality." (ibid., p. 365.)

"The truth of the matter is that all the stories of Pilate's opposition to the crucifixion of Jesus are wholly unhistorical, emanating from the end of the first Christian century, when large numbers of Gentiles had embraced Christianity and it had become clear to Paul that the future of Christianity depended upon the Gentiles and not upon the Jews, who 'remained steadfast in their unbelief' and would not recognize 'the curse of God that was hanged.'" (Klausner, J., op. cit., p. 348.)

32) That this statement in St. Luke concerning the "calling together of the chief priests and rulers and people" is proof of the fact that the priests and elders had not returned to Pilate from Herod, but had gone rather to the temple, as Edersheim would have it (cfr. p. 573), does not seem sufficiently evident. The fact that the "people" are also included in this gathering would mean that they too had to be called es-



"Therefore after I have scouraged Him, I will release Him." <sup>34)</sup> That was the wedge by which the Jewish mob, egged on by the blood-thirsty priests and elders, was encouraged to demand the life and finally to obtain the life of the man they despised.

At this point in the narrative a new thought is introduced. This new turn in the trial was not instigated, so it seems, by the priests and elders, who had brought Jesus, for their primary object was to get this matter settled as quickly as possible, before some of Jesus' followers might spoil their plans. But by this time the people, who had come for the feast, were milling about in the streets. Since the releasing of a prisoner at the Passover was a yearly custom, it would be natural that a group, not interested in the present affairs, would assemble and demand that Pilate repeat this custom. This opportunity was seized by the perplexed Roman, for he still desired to satisfy everybody and yet release Jesus. So he made them an offer. The crafty Pilate recalled that at that time there lay in the prison a very dangerous criminal, Barabbas by name, who had been sentenced for insurrection and murder and was, probably, by profession a robber. Certainly this man was recognized as a menace to society, so Pilate mused. So, mounting the dias upon which the official seat of judgment stood, for a forensic act demanded such a formality, as would follow, he said, "Whom do you wish that I release for you, Barabbas or Jesus, who is called Christ?" <sup>35)</sup>

Deep down in his heart Pilate hoped that the Jews would choose

---

pecially by Pilate for this second trial before the Roman. It is our view that all these trials took place before the morning sacrifice, when the priests would not be needed in the temple.

33) Lk. 23, 14, 15.

34) Lk. 23, 16.

35) Mt. 27, 17.



the meek Galilean, standing before him, instead of the gruff, rough, hardened criminal. By this time, even if he had not known it from the beginning, he could see that the Jews only desired Jesus' life because of personal envy. Now just at this moment another incident tended to increase his wariness. He had hardly been seated on the chair of judgment, when his wife of whom tradition tells us that she was named Claudia Procula and had become a proselyte of Judaism, sent a message to her husband with the warning, "Do not have anything to do with that righteous man! For I have suffered many things today in a dream concerning Him." <sup>36)</sup> This, too must have left its impression on Pilate. But the question has been asked, How did the wife of Pilate know of the trial of Jesus? It seems very probable that on the night before, when the priests desired an escort of soldiers for the arrest of Jesus, Pilate, if not confronted in person, learned of the impending arrest. He may have even mentioned it to his wife, hence she knew of the impending trial.

During this pause in the proceedings the priests and leaders were not idle. They were inciting the the crowd to choose Barabbas, instead of Jesus. And so it may be that instead of the request of Claudia Procula saving Jesus, it gave the Jewish rulers enough opportunity to sway the vote of the populace against the Nazarene. To the question of Pilate, "Whom do you wish of the two that I release for you? Do you want me to release for you the king of the Jews?" <sup>37)</sup> they answered as with one voice, "Barabbas!" <sup>38)</sup> Away with this man, release for us Barabbas!" <sup>39)</sup> But Pilate, not expecting such an answer, quickly demanded, "Now what shall I do with Jesus, who is called Christ?" <sup>40)</sup> They did not leave him

---

36) Mt. 27, 19. 37) Mk. 15, 9. 38) Mt. 27, 21. 39) Lk. 23, 18.



waiting for an answer, but shouted with their hoarse throats, "Let Him be crucified!" <sup>41)</sup> But again Pilate asked, "Why, what evil has He done?" <sup>42)</sup> I have found no cause for death in Him. After chastising Him, I will let Him go therefore!" <sup>43)</sup> But by now the mob was out of control. They just shouted in chorus, "Crucify Him!" <sup>44)</sup> Pilate saw that the situation was becoming grave. He realized that he must do something to quell this uprising. The raucous voices of the mob, led by the leaders and priests, had won. Pilate saw that he would have to give in.

Therefore he demanded that a basin of water be brought in. It has been suggested that here Pilate attempted to work on the religious consciences of these people by reacting a Jewish custom. <sup>45)</sup> He took this water and washed his hands before the people, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this man. You see to it!" <sup>46)</sup> And all the people replied, "His blood be on us and on our children!" <sup>46)</sup> By this act then Pilate, first of all, appealed to their innate feeling of justice and, secondly, tried to exonerate himself in his present predicament. <sup>47)</sup>

The Roman Procurator then released the thief, Barabbas, and handed Jesus over to the soldiers to be prepared for crucifixion, the

40) Mt. 27, 22.

41) Mt. 27, 22.

42) Mt. 27, 23.

43) Lk. 23, 22.

44) Mk. 15, 14.

45) "Although we find allusions to some such customs among the heathen, that which here took place was an essentially Jewish rite, which must have appealed the more forcible to the Jews that it was done by Pilate. And, not only the rite, but the very words were Jewish. They recall not merely the rite prescribed in Deut. xxi. 6, &c., . . . but the very words of such Old Testament expressions as in 2 Sam. iii. 28, and Ps. xxv. 5, lxxiii. 13, and, in later times, in Sus. ver. 46." (Edersheim, A., op. cit., p. 578)

46) Mt. 27, 24. 25.



first stage of which was scourging.<sup>48)</sup> We shall not stop for a minute description of this horrifying procedure. Its purpose, so we are told by the pagan writers, was to weaken the condemned man so that the actual crucifixion would not last too long. In fact, in some cases the scourging alone was sufficient to inflict death. After Jesus had been lashed to a pole and stripped to the waist, his back was beaten raw and bloody by the metal tipped thongs of the whip. How long He had to endure this agony, the text makes no mention. After the soldiers had completed this task, they took a little additional time to show their contempt. They mocked Jesus, as had the Jews and Idumaeans before them. They placed a crown of thorns on the brow of Jesus, pressing the thorny prongs well into the temples, threw a purple robe over the bloody shoulders of the suffering prisoner, placed a reed for a scepter into His hand, and then ridiculed the Jews by bowing before their supposed king and saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!"<sup>49)</sup> They too slapped Him in the face and made sport of Him, until finally Pilate saw that it was enough. In the meantime another plan had entered his mind, as he viewed this disparaging scene, which probably took place in a room which was a part of the pretorium.

---

47) "This act of Pilate was intended to signify his belief that Jesus was not being legally condemned, but sacrificed to the popular will." (Burton, E.D., & Mathews, S., op. cit., pp. 264. 265.)

48) Steinmeyer attempts to delineate between the various elements of the Passion story in a dogmatic way and therefore claims, "The words of the Passion prophecy, 'to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify,' require us to separate the scourging very decidedly from the crucifying, and to regard the former as a distinct element of the Passion of Jesus." (op. cit., pp. 114. 115.) This is well and good, but it is not historical, for Jerome tells us, "Sciendum est, Pilatum Romanis legibus ministrasse, quibus sancitum erat, ut qui crucifigerentur, prius flagellis verberarentur." (Quoted from Steinmeyer, op. cit., p. 115, who disagrees with the Church Father.)



With the scourging completed Pilate stepped out before the Jewish mob once more and announced, "Behold, I bring Him out to you, that you might know that I find no guilt in Him." 50) Pilate's scheme this time was to instill pity in the hearts of these people. He hoped that now, when they would see what torture had been inflicted on the prisoner, they would soften and permit Him to go free. Pilate would have won his point after all. When Jesus was led out, a pitiful sight to behold with the crown of thorns, the purple robe, and the lacerated back and arms, Pilate himself was so moved that all he could find to say was, with a nod in his direction, "Behold, the man!" 51)

But if Pilate thought that he could find a spark of compassion in those stony hearts, he was badly mistaken, for hardly had they laid their eyes on Jesus again when they burst forth with the shout, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" 52) But Pilate resorted again to the slur with which he began the trial, "You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no guilt in Him." 52)

That forced the Jews to bring forth the real cause for their demands. They exclaimed, "We have a law, and according to our law He

---

49) Jn. 19, 3. It is noteworthy that the Jews ridiculed the prophetic claims of Jesus, while the Romans, the kingly.

50) Jn. 19, 4. These last scenes of the trial are reported only by St. John. The other three writers finish the trial with the scourging and the preparation for the crucifixion. In a way they are correct. The trial really ended there. But St. John, who supplements at a much later date, remembers the further attempts of Pilate to free Jesus and, therefore, for completeness sake includes them. We may agree with Steinmeyer here, who writes, "The apostle, who relates throughout nothing except that which he had heard and seen with his own eyes, was a personal witness of the proceedings." (*op. cit.*, p. 118.) It is not surprising then that he relates more of the details than the others.

51) Jn. 19, 5

52) Jn. 19, 6.



must die, because He made Himself the Son of God." <sup>53)</sup> That was a different story. When Pilate heard those words, he was more disturbed than ever. Now Pilate clearly saw that Jesus was not a political offender, as he had already sensed through his cross-examination of Jesus. The political offense had been a mere pretext. Back again he went into the Pretorium and asked Jesus, "Where did You come from?" <sup>54)</sup> But Jesus gave him no answer. But Pilate asked further, "Do You not speak to me? Do You not know that I have power to let You go and I have power to crucify You?" <sup>55)</sup> Jesus corrected this last statement with the words, "You would have have no power at all in regard to Me, unless it be given you from above. Therefore he who handed Me over to you has the greater sin." <sup>56)</sup> When Pilate heard those words, whether his pagan superstition had been revived or whether he was more determined than ever to free an innocent man, he at least made another strong effort to free Jesus.

But his adversaries knew his weak spot. They introduced a new aspect, that touched the selfish interests of Pilate. They warned the Roman, "If you let this man go, you are not the friend of Caesar. Everyone who makes himself king speaks against Caesar!" <sup>57)</sup> This brought the Procurator back to his senses. The problem was becoming more involved again. Who knows what charges might be brought against him in Rome by these fanatical Jews in regard to this Nazarene. Who knows what Tiberius, the heartless Roman Emperor, might do to him, for such a breach? But this exclamation of loyalty to the Emperor on the part of the Jews, was it genuine? Pilate knew how the Jews chafed under the Roman yoke,

---

53) Jn. 19, 7.

54) Jn. 19, 9.

55) Jn. 19, 10.

56) Jn. 19, 11.

57) Jn. 19, 12.



how time after time various uprisings had rippled the peaceful calm of the land. And so, sitting on the bench of judgment once more, he sneered, "Behold, your king!" 58) This was not heeded, but merely urged the cry, "Away with Him, away with Him, crucify Him." 59) In a final attempt Pilate cried back, "Shall I crucify your king?" 59) But the chief priests blocked this entire attempt at sarcasm with the flat statement of loyalty to the Roman government, which was so dangerous for Pilate, "We have no king, but Caesar!" 59)

The Procurator then saw that it was a matter of this man's life or a matter of his own safety. He took the course that would prove the more expedient, as far as he was concerned, and delivered Jesus to the soldiers to be crucified. And the fiasco, which masqueraded as a trial, was brought to an end. Jesus, pronounced innocent five times by the Roman judge and once by the Galilean prince, both representatives of the imperial Roman government, was led to the cross, a convicted man.

---

58) Jn. 19, 14.

59) Jn. 19, 15.



#### IV.

#### ON THE CROSS OF CALVARY

The preparations for crucifixion did not take very long. The soldiers soon made ready the standard and cross piece, which served for the cross. Four soldiers and a centurian were assigned to each man, who was to be crucified. These men prepared for themselves a lunch and took along some wine to drink, for the crucified often hung for a day, or even longer, before the last breath of life ebbed from his pain wracked body. And so it was before nine in the morning, when this sorrowful procession began to wind its way through the narrow streets of Jerusalem toward the hill, called Golgotha,<sup>1)</sup> because of its skull-like shape, which was situated somewhere outside of the city gate near the main roads, leading into the city. In this procession on Friday morning there were three men, each bearing his cross, or perhaps just the cross piece,<sup>2)</sup> for if anyone has ever hoisted timbers he will know that wooden planks are not light! Jesus, it must not be lost sight of, was in a much weakened condition. He had had no food for almost twelve hours, he had gone without sleep the night before, and he had undergone a severe lashing at the hands of the Roman soldiers, and, hence, he was not ready to carry a heavy load.

- 
- 1) St. Luke alone has the name "Calvary". Meyer comments; "κρανίον ; Griechische Uebersetzung von Γολγοθᾶ Schaedel, von der Form so genannt." (op. cit., Handbuch ueber das Evangelium des St. Markus und Lukas, p. 628. )
- 2) C. Fiske and B. S. Easton hold this view: "The crossbeam only. No one could unaided carry an entire cross." (op. cit., p. 188.) But the Abbe Constant Fouard takes the opposite opinion and quotes in his favor from Plutarch: "Every malefactor carries his cross." Plutarch, De sera Numinis vindicta, ix., quoted in op. cit., p. 320.) Ylvisaker, also, maintains: "It is a question, however, if this regulation applied to the entire cross, or only to the cross-tree, presumably to the former." (op. cit., p. 735.)



The Question now arises how do we know what time this all took place? We have several sources of information. During the trial itself there are two references to the time. St. John tells us that when they brought Jesus to Pilate the first time it was early. <sup>3)</sup> That, we suggested before, was about five o'clock. And we saw from St. Matthew, <sup>4)</sup> in agreement with this statement, that Pilate's wife was not as yet astir, when the trial began. Then finally at the end of the trial St. John remarks that, as Pilate sat upon the official seat of justice, it was <sup>5)</sup> about the sixth hour, that is, around six or seven in the morning.

However, after the crucifixion is under way, St. Mark relates, <sup>6)</sup> "And it was the third hour and they crucified him." And then later in recording the events that transpired on the cross the first three evangelists note that the darkness came upon the earth at the sixth hour. Do we have here a contradiction, when comparing this with St. John's gospel, since he distinctly states that Pilate judged at the sixth hour? There is only one conclusion that we can come to, and that seems to be a very natural and logical one. It is the application of the old axiom, "When in Rome do as the Romans do!" When the first three men wrote their gospels, Christianity still hung close to Palestine; it still was a "Jewish sect," so to say. The personnel was almost entirely Jewish. The very men who wrote these first three gospels were either themselves closely connected in time and blood with these events that had occurred

---

3) Jn. 18, 28)

4) Mt. 27, 19.)

5) Jn. 19, 14.)

6) Mk. 15, 25.)



in Palestine, or else they were coached by men, who but a short time before had gone through these experiences. It is the most natural thing in the world, therefore, that they spoke of these things in the light of the language which to them was their mother tongue. So we find them using the Jewish method of telling time, which, as we mentioned before, counted the hours beginning at six in the evening and six in the morning. Therefore the third hour of St. Mark was about nine in the morning, and the sixth hour of the three was about noon.

St. John, on the other hand, wrote at a much later time. By then St. Paul had widened the boundaries of Christianity to include the world of that time. All over, small Christian groups were worshipping. St. John, himself, had left Palestine and was now living in Ephesus in the midst of Greek influence. He was no longer a traveling preacher, as had been St. Luke, and St. Mark, who were, since they wrote earlier, closer to the Hebrew culture. St. John had not remained within the confines of Palestine, as St. Matthew, who it seems even wrote his original text in Aramaic. St. John was a man of the Greek world. His gospel, as we said at the very outset, was comparable to an editorial, setting forth Christianity from a Greek background, hence his many allusions to the philosophical terms of the day. When the English man speaks of money, he uses the pound sterling as his standard; when an American thinks of money, the word "dollar" comes to his mind. Thus also St. John, in writing in a Hellenized world, did not use the Jewish method of calculating time, beginning at six in the morning, but rather he employed our method and also the method of the Graeco-Roman world of his day, which starts the day with midnight and ends it with midnight. To him  
7)  
then the sixth hour meant only one thing, six in the morning.



Fouard complains that the solution suggested above would "restrict the several scenes of the Passion to a very limited space of time."<sup>8)</sup> He then goes on to propound a lengthy hypothesis, basing it on the fact that the Jews divided the day, as they did also the night, into four quarters and that these quarters were named by their initial hours. St. Mark says that Jesus was crucified at the third hour, that is, in the quarter lasting from nine until noon. St. John, using the hour as it reads, merely means that Jesus was judged sometime right before noon, also during the "third hour." That would pro-long the trial during the entire morning hours. We would contest this view on two points. We are claiming here that St. John employs the Jewish method of telling time, but we are not consistent, since his "sixth hour" does not have the same meaning as that of the other three evangelists, when they refer to the darkness. Theirs then refers to the period from twelve to three. This view, on that score, seems very artificial. It is taking John out of his Greek environment and yet postulating an assumption which is not consistent by not permitting John to speak as a Jew. Also it must be remembered that the priests are present at all these trials. They had to assist in the morning sacrifice, sometime right after nine o'clock, and hence could not be free until noon.

St. Augustine has a novel explanation of this seeming difficulty. He claims first of all that St. John gives his time in reference to what went on after the sentence of Pilate. "And thus we could still take the sense quite fairly to be that, on the completion of the fifth hour and the commencement of the sixth, those matters were

---

7) Fahling, though holding this view, weakens it by adding, "At other



going on which are recorded in connection with the Lord's crucifixion, until, on the close of the sixth hour and when he was hanging on the cross, the darkness occurred which is attested by three of the evangelists, namely, Matthew, Mark, and Luke." <sup>9)</sup> St. Mark, on the other hand, in his reference to the time of the crucifixion speaks of the accusations and insistent cries of the Jews that Jesus should be crucified. "The Jews therefore said unto him, 'It is not lawful for us to put any man to death. 'Consequently, what they were especially unwilling to have the appearance of doing that Mark here shows that they actually did do at the third hour. For he judged most truly that the Lord's murderer was rather the tongue of the Jews than the hand of the soldiers." <sup>9)</sup> But a careful study of the text will show that St. Mark's reference to the time is not given in connection with the trial before Pilate, but is inserted during the time when Jesus was hanging on the cross. His view, too, must be ruled out as an artificial attempt at harmony.

We have spent some time in presenting our view on the time. The trial before Pilate ended around seven. Probably an hour was con-

---

7) times John used the Jewish reckoning of time. John 1: 39 . . . John 4:6." (Fahling, A., Harmony of The Gospels, p. 208. ) Such a concession seems unnecessary, for in those two cases the Roman hour could also be very probable.

8) Fouard, the Abbe Constant, op. cit., p. 314.

9) Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, op. cit., p. 199, III, xiii,



sumed in the final preparations by the soldiers, for three men had to be sentenced that day. By the time the men were conducted out to the mound of execution it was between eight and nine. That was still before the morning sacrifice, permitting the priests to attend for a short while, at least. All this fits in well with the presentation of the four accounts. For the priests are only mentioned at the beginning, soon after Jesus was raised upon the cross. If this were to take place just before noon, the priests could not have been with Jesus all morning, for they had their duties in the temple.

Before we consider the events at Golgatha, we <sup>h</sup>ould mention the final mocking of the soldiers. In the accounts of St. Matthew and St. Mark we find after the sentence is pronounced by Pilate a section almost parallel to that presented by St. John in regard to the sport of the Roman soldiers at the expense of Jesus. That this may be just a different rendering of this same event is possible, but it is more probable that the mockery was actually repeated or rather continued after the final sentence of Pilate. We should suggest that these accounts by the first two evangelists, so to say, report just the actions of the soldiers without mentioning the final vain attempts of Pilate at freeing Jesus. Therefore St. John's account does not fall previous to theirs, but is included within it. The first two writers do not tell of these last events for as they thought, they do not add materially to the trial. St. John appends them later on as is his custom so frequently. The sense then is easily forthcoming, when we follow anyone of the gospels. After some more play the Roman soldiers eventually removed the robe of purple and having redressed Jesus in his own garb led him out to Golgotha.



On the way through the traditional via dolorosa two things occurred that we must relate. Jesus had not gone far, bearing His heavy burden, when His weak and worn body just would not carry Him a step further. He collapsed right on the hard cobblestones. The Roman soldiers, not to waste time, picked at random a Jew from the large audience along the way, a certain Simon of Cyrene, and compelled him to carry the cross after Jesus. Who this man was or what became of him after while we are not told. St. Mark tells us the names of his two sons, Alexander and Rufus, and from the writings of St. Paul we find one of them later, so tradition has it, in Rome, for St. Paul greets a Rufus there. <sup>10)</sup> It is conjectured, therefore, with some justification that this Simon was converted to Christianity along with his family. It would seem strange if the very man who bore the cross of Jesus after Him would not become a disciple of His.

It may have been during this interim in the treke to Golgotha that Jesus spoke to the great crowd of women who followed Him and lamented his fortune. Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children because, lo, the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed are the <sup>x</sup>b<sup>a</sup>ren and the wombs that never gave birth and the breasts that never gave suck. 'Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!' Because if in a green tree they do these things, what will happen in a dry?" <sup>11)</sup>

---

10) (Cfr. Romans 16, 13.)

11) Lk. 23, 28-31.)



With these words Jesus pointed to the terrible destruction of Jerusalem, which was but a generation in the offing. Many of the people, who lived in Jerusalem on the day of Jesus' crucifixion, lived to cry out in anguish these very words of the Crucified. The suffering must have been intense, during the long siege of the Romans, when food ran short, and after the fall of the city, when the Romans gave vent to their anger for the Jews' stubborn resistance. Then not three crucifixes dotted the country side, but hundreds upon hundreds.

When this solemn procession reached the hill top, the soldiers immediately prepared the three men for the terrible ordeal to follow. It was customary to offer the men a stupifying drink just before the actual nailing to the crosses. Jewish tradition also tells us of this practice.<sup>12)</sup> "According to an ancient Baraita [i. e., part of the Talmud ], 'when a man is going out to be killed they suffer him to drink a grain of frankincense in a cup of wine to deaden his senses. . . wealthy women of Jerusalem used to contribute these things and bring them.'<sup>13)</sup> The first two evangelists tell us of this potion. The first one, though, claims that it is "wine mixed with gall,"<sup>14)</sup> while the other mentions "wine mixed with myrrh."<sup>14)</sup> The fact of the matter is that both could have been in the drink. That is the view of St. Augustine.<sup>15)</sup> Some, however, in their over enthusiasm to show discrepancies in these accounts prove too much. That is to say, they attempt to show that this first drink mentioned by the first two writers is the same as the drinks spoken of by the others, and thereby claim contradictions. So Dalman errs.<sup>16)</sup>

---

12) Cfr. Babylonian Talmud p. 128.

13) Klausner, J., op. cit., p. 352. 14) Mt. 27, 34; Mk. 15, 23.

15) "For the gall is mentioned with a view to express the bitterness of



This drink, which would have alleviated the first throbbing pains, was not accepted by Jesus. He resolved to suffer this cruel death to the very end. The crucifixion proper was then begun. The exact procedure is very doubtful. Whether the entire cross was placed on the ground while the hands and feet of the victim were nailed to it, or whether just the hands of the convicted man were first nailed to the cross piece, which was then raised to the upright beam, already fastened in the ground, will never be known. It would seem less torturous and more convenient to work with the entire cross on the ground. Thus Emil Ludwig describes the scene, "While some of the soldiers are digging holes in the ground, others are nailing the criminals to the crosses as these lie flat upon the soil." 17) The instrument of torture was not as large as some would have us believe today. The horizontal arm was probably six feet across, while the vertical beam, extending several feet into the ground, so as to brace the load, probably reached in all ten to twelve feet. Midway up the longer beam there was a little

---

15) the potion. And wine mingled with myrrh is remarkable for its bitterness. The fact may also be that gall and myrrh together made the wine exceedingly bitter." (Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, op. cit., p. 197 III, xi, 38.)

16) "1 . . . Jesus was given to drink wine mingled with myrrh (Mk. 15, 23), but refused it. According to Lk. 23, 36, the drink which was offered mockingly by the soldiers instead of wine was vinegar; according to Mt. 27, 34 (probably because of Ps. 69, 22) -- vinegar mingled with gall. But Mark is most probably right in stating that it was a narcotic drink." (Dalman, G., op. cit., p. 193. )

17) Ludwig, E. op. cit., p. 306.



stool affixed on which the victim could rest the weight of his body, otherwise the nails through the hands would have a tendency to tear the flesh. In this position then the sufferer, enduring agonizing pains, looked into the faces of his accusers, for his feet were but a foot or so above the ground. And in that way Jesus was nailed to the cross with one nail through each palm and one or two through his feet.

When the three crosses were lifted into place, it was noticed that Jesus was in the midst of the other two criminals, as if to signify that he was the worst. St. Mark notes that this was a fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah in his fifty-third chapter: "And He was numbered with the transgressors." <sup>18)</sup> Now, with their work finished the Roman soldiers sat guarding at the foot of the crosses to await the end. It was probably while these operations were going on that Jesus spoke his first words from the cross. If not while he was being nailed to the cross then while he was looking down upon the gaping crown, many of whom had shouted their voices hoarse that morning in demanding his life, he exclaimed, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." <sup>19)</sup> What a profound impression that should have had on the ears of those bystanders. But their replies were far from prayers, such as that of Jesus'.

They began to deride and ridicule, even as they had done at the trials. The priests again led in this calumny. The reason for this might seem quite natural, if we realize just what Pilate had done to square himself with the Jews for their stubborn insistence during the trial. A sign was nailed to the part of the cross which extended above

---

18) Is. 53, 12.

19) Lk. 23, 34.



the head, which read in three languages, Greek, Latin, and Hebrew  
 20)  
 (Aramaic). "This is the King of the Jews." As far as we can ascertain,  
 it seems as if this inscription was not placed on the cross until after  
 the crucified had hung on their crosses for some time, for St. Matthew  
 hints at such a conclusion by placing the inscription incident after the  
 soldiers had been watching for awhile. Therefore, it seems probable that  
 this poster was not carried out before Jesus, as it was in the case of  
 many criminals to announce the cause of their death. Steinmeyer says,  
 "Archaeological investigations do not lead to the conclusion that the  
 practice of displaying a written 'accusation' on the occasion of an ex-  
 ecution was an invariable one, or that it was required by law."  
 21)  
 The actual procedure is described by St. John and seems to fit into the  
 picture a little after Jesus is lead away from the Pretorium. The  
 priests would have deemed it beneath their dignity to fall into the ranks  
 of such a motley crowd, as followed Jesus to Golgotha. But hardly had  
 they returned to the temple to assume their morning duties, when an<sup>an</sup> informer  
 would report to them that a sign was nailed above the head of Jesus,  
 broadcasting to the holiday multitudes that this was the king of the Jews.  
 That must not remain there. The priests naturally rushed over to Pilate  
 once more and implored. "Do not write, 'the king of the Jews, 'but this

---

20) The fact that each gospel gives a different rendition of the inscription on the cross has caused trouble for some in harmonizing the accounts. Fouard presents a very plausible and satisfactory footnote on the matter. "The inscription of the Cross is different in each of the Evangelists. S. Mark probably gives the Latin form; [Rex Judaeorum] S. Luke, the Greek [ὁ βασιλεὺς τῶν Ἰουδαίων]; S. John, the Aramean [כִּי מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָא]. (Fouard, the Abbe C. op. cit., p. 327.) It seems strange that he fails to mention St. Matthew, but his is so similar to St. Luke that it needs no comment. It may be just a free rendering of the latter.

21) Steinmeyer, op. cit., p. 146.



fellow said, 'I am the king of the Jews!'"<sup>22)</sup> But Pilate had had enough of this bickering and so he finally became man enough to stand up for his authority and told these priests, "What I have written, I have written."<sup>23)</sup>

Now what to do. The priests could not let the Jewish pilgrims read these words. It might cause an uproar. So to check any adverse repercussion, they made their way through the winding streets and out to the site of the three crosses and there mingled with the mob to ridicule the king of the Jews. This they felt would counteract any claims on the part of Jesus' supporters that he was really what the inscription claimed.

While this commotion, caused by the inscription, was being stilled by the priests, the soldiers, who had carried out this cruel execution, claimed their perquisites. ~~The~~ condemned man was usually stripped of all his garments which the soldiers then confiscated, and left to die exposed to all who passed by. But that may not have held in this case, or in all the cases in Palestine. Edersheim relates, "In the case of Jesus we have reason to think that, while the mode of punishment to which He was subjected was un-Jewish, every concession would be made to Jewish custom, and hence we thankfully believe that on the Cross He was spared the indignity of exposure. Such would have been truly un-Jewish."<sup>24)</sup> We are also informed in the apocryphal book, called the Gospel of Nicodemus, that "when they came to the place which is called Golgotha, they stripped him of his raiment, and girt him about with a linen cloth, and put a crown of thorns upon his head, and put a reed in his hand."<sup>25)</sup>

---

22) Jn. 19, 21.

23) Jn. 19, 22.

24) Edersheim, A. op. cit., p. 584.)

25) Gospel of Nicodemus, VII, 2.



This traditional Christian view would seem to be in agreement with the Jewish customs of the times, as related above.

But five articles of clothing were left to these four men, the sandals, the girdle, the head gear, and the outer cloak. For these the soldiers cast lots. But the more expensive piece of cloth the seamless inner garment, or tunic, could not be divided, for tearing it would ruin it. The only solution was to cast the dice also for this bit of raiment. The fortunate soldier would win that costly booty. Both St. Matthew and St. John see in this the fulfillment of the words of the twenty-second Psalm, "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture."

The people about the cross had not remained silent during all these minutes. With the priests as the instigators many voices were heard, flinging rebukes and taunts at the suffering man on the center cross. Some-one, who had been present at the trial on the night before, remembered the words of the witnesses. These were hurled into the air, soon to be picked up by the milling crowd, "You, who would tear down the temple and build it up in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down now from the cross!"<sup>26)</sup> The priests and the rulers and scribes added,

"He saved others, himself he cannot save! He is the king of Israel!?"  
Let him come down now from the cross and we will believe in him! He trusted in God, let Him save Him, if he wants Him, for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'<sup>27)</sup> The soldiers, who had been sitting at the foot of

---

26) Mt. 27, 40.

27) Mt. 27, 42. 43. The other two writers quote sayings which are very similar to those found in St. Matthew. We must remember that these taunts were repeated often by the crowd, as is the case in any mob. Therefore the slight differences are brought about by the fact that one writer records one version, while the other, another version.



the cross also joined in this revelling. As they drank their cheap sour wine, they jestingly held up their mugs to Jesus and drank a toast, saying, 28)

"If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself!" What a spectacle that must have presented to the devout pilgrim entering the holy city of Jerusalem that morning for the first day of the Feast. Jew and Gentile forgot their differences for the moment. A common cause had bound them together, -- the reviling of that center cross. Man, when filled with hate and malice, stoops to levels lower than the animals.

Nor were the onlookers the only members of this chorus of cal- 29)  
umny. One of the malefactors, crucified with Jesus, joined in the refrain. He too, thinking of his own welfare, cried out, "Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!" But the other criminal warned him, "Don't you fear God, because you are in the same judgment? And you are suffering justly, for we have received just what our deeds deserved, but this man has done nothing amiss." And then looking to Jesus, he asked, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom" Jesus, in turn, looking with compassion on this penitent man, spoke the second time from the cross, again directing his thoughts not toward his own welfare but toward that of his fellow 30)  
man, "Verily, I say to you, 'Today you will be with me in paradise!'"

Tradition tells us that the name of this thief was Dimas. But that he knew Jesus before his crucifixion, as some would claim, is

---

28) Lk. 23, 37.

29) Even though the first two evangelists use the plural in mentioning this incident, which gives the impression that both thieves joined in the mockery around the cross, we must remember that theirs is only an enumeration of the broad fact that the people, the chief priests, the scribes, the elders, and using the categorical plural, the malefactors turned against Jesus. That is a common grammatical construction, where the plural is used to classify, where at times the singular is really meant. It is St. Luke who gives us the details on the situation and he distinguishes between the two men. Edersheim suggests that St. Luke might have received his information on these events from the centurion at the cross. This cannot merit consideration as a contradiction.



rather far-fetched. He probably was a Jew, and as all the Jews, had the common hope of a Messiah. When he saw how serenely Jesus withstood the cruel mental anguish and agonizing physical tortures with never a word of complaint, not even against those who continued to revile and rebuke, he must have been touched. In those moments he was convinced, as also others at the cross, that this was not a mere man. He finally came to believe what the inscription, above Jesus' head, said, namely, that he was the king of the Jews, the Messiah of Israel. This faith he expressed in his humble request. Whether he fully understood every detail comprehended in the term "kingdom of God," we cannot imagine, but he knew enough to be accepted by a loving Savior, who is ready to receive any penitent.

By this time the priests and scribes had returned to the city to carry out their duties of the festival. We can suppose that even the crowd had thinned, since the hour of noon was approaching. Since the apostle John has nothing to say from the time of the parting of the garments by the soldiers to the incident, that we shall relate next, we feel that he returned to the city to bring the mother of Jesus and the other women out to the scene of the execution. As they approached the cross, Jesus beheld his mother and his beloved disciple, and with them his mother's sister, also named Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.<sup>31)</sup> Once more Jesus' compassion and deep pity went out for those near Him. For the third time his lips moved as he hung suspended from the accursed tree, and he uttered the words, addressed to his

---

30) These last statements are found in St. Luke 23, 39 - 43.

31) It seems better to take the enumeration of St. John as referring to only three women, because the Greek has but two connectives, thereby making the second "Mary, The wife of Cleophas," The appositive to his mother's sister." Jn. 19, 25.

32) This scene is described by St. John 19, 26. 27.



mother. "Woman, behold your son." And then looking at the disciple, he said, "Behold, your mother." <sup>32)</sup> Thus Jesus turned over his mother to the care of this disciple.

It is noteworthy that at the very beginning of his ministry, just before performing his first miracle at the wedding of Cana, Jesus addressed his mother as "Woman," and now as his sojourn here on earth draws to a close, he again used that designation. The coincidence is singular and yet pregnant with meaning. Jesus inferred with this word three years before that the earthly ties that bound him to his mother were broken, and now just before death is to take Him back to his Father, He confirmed that opinion by placing His mother into the household of this disciple, whom he loved dearly. Jesus is primarily the Son of God, secondarily, the son of Mary.

The people beholding this spectacle noticed by this time that the heavens were beginning to thicken. Gradually the sun was being blocked, so that long shadows were cast over the face of the earth. It gave the appearance of a dense storm covering the skies. It symbolized that a fierce storm was raging in the soul of Jesus. By now, the first three writers tell us, noon had come, the sixth hour by Jewish reckoning. During the next three hours this pall of gloom was to hang over this section of Palestine. Those three hours were marked with deep spiritual torments, which in turn were reflected in the very realm of nature. That this physical phenomenon was caused by natural causes does not remove its miraculous nature; God is able to send storm or wind at will, even as He can quell them. So here also thick clouds of sirocco vapour, pouring in from the desert to the east, cut off the sunlight so that even nature

---

32) This scene is described by St. John 19, 26. 27.



would not witness its Lord suffering the torments of the damned.

When these three fearful hours were drawing to a close, Jesus laid bare his heart and told the world what he had suffered during those awful moments. He cried out with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, Lama sabachthani?" which is the Aramaic-Hebrew mixture for "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" <sup>33)</sup> The words of this confession were those spoken by David in prophecy in his twenty-second Psalm, one thousand years before, but not until this hour did they find their fulfillment. What a confession Jesus made, when He cried out thus. To be forsaken of God! This was, as Steinmeyer expresses it, "the moment of His dying. When He says: 'Why hast Thou forsaken Me?' He suffers death. . . . How could the Son die otherwise than when the Father (of whom He said: 'The living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father.') <sup>34)</sup> forsook Him and gave Him up to death?"

But some of those standing near, probably the soldiers, for they would not understand the Aramaic, whereas it could almost be taken for granted that a true Jew would recognize the word for "God" (Eli) in counter distinction from the common name, thought that Jesus called for <sup>35)</sup> Elias. Since Elias was a common Hebrew name, they thought that He

---

33) Mt. 27, 46.

34) Steinmeyer, op. cit., p. 171.

35) We feel that Jesus spoke these words in Aramaic-Hebrew. The first words were Hebrew, since they would approximate more closely the name of Elias than the Aramaic, while the latter half was in the Aramaic vernacular, as both the texts of St. Matthew and St. Mark show. Dalman, though he holds that Jesus spoke the entire sentence in Hebrew, quoting from the Old Testament, remarks that such an admixture was not rare. "The Targum has Psalm xxii. 2 partly in Hebrew and partly in Aramaic, as also Onkelos often retains the Hebrew el." (op. cit., p. 205.)



besought his help. Or it may have been known to them, through their mingling with the Jews, that Elias was one of the great prophets, and accordingly they felt that Jesus Prayed for his assistance. They exclaimed in derision: "Lo, He calls for Elias!"  
36)

By the time Jesus made this last utterance He had passed through the terrible sufferings of the past hours and it was natural that after such a soul struggle He should think once more of his personal needs. He knew that the end was near, that He had fulfilled His mission so He requested a drink, with the words, "I thirst."  
37) 38) When one of the men heard that, he ran and filled a sponge with some of their sour wine, placed the sponge on the short stem of a Hyssop, and reached it up to Jesus. But his comrades were not of such a kind disposition and attempted to withhold this ministry of pity, crying, "Let be, let us see if Elias

36) Mk. 15, 35.

37) This verse Jn. 19, 28, has always been a crux to this writer, when taken in the common translation of the A.V., "After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst." When taken in its form there, Jesus spoke the last words in order to fulfill Scripture. The difficulty arises in that there is no direct passage referring to this statement in the Old Testament. The closest that we can come to it is in the twenty-second Psalm, where David cries, in prophetic vision, "My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death." (vs. 15.) But even this can only be applied to the fifth utterance of Jesus with a bit of deducing. It seems as if the grammatical construction here permits another, even more satisfactory, translation. If the apodosis of this sentence is made to begin at the word *ταυτα*, instead of at the word *επειτα*, the sentence would give this thought, "After these things when Jesus knew that all things were completed in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, (then) said, 'I thirst.'" There is a parallel construction in the first verse of the thirteenth chapter of St. John, where this use of a *επειτα* clause, followed by a *ταυτα* clause is very apparent. We have therefore taken this verse in the manner described above.

38) Jn. 19, 28.



will come to save Him." 39)

But the end was near at hand. The drink had revived the suffering Jesus somewhat, but now in His fifth statement He expressed what already He had thought, just prior to His request for the drink. He cried with a loud voice, "It is finished!" 40) The first three evangelists do not record the words, but they all note this final shout of victory, which came but a few minutes before the end. Jesus announced to the world that He had completed what He had started out to do. He had finished His task; He had redeemed the world. In this cry we hear Jesus' Yea and Amen to the angel chorus at His birth, "Peace on earth, good will to men!" 41) The very fact that He was able to shout forth triumphantly just before death would tend to show that He did not die of exhaustion, as did most criminals, executed by crucifixion, but that He died because He wanted to die. He gave up His own life, when He willed.

St. Luke alone relates the very last words of Jesus, spoken right after the call of victory. As He bowed His head in death, Jesus breathed a prayer, taken from the thirty-first Psalm, "Father, into Your hands I commend My spirit." 42) Thus Jesus died. Here again there is a striking coincidence. The first and last words of Jesus on the cross began with the word, "Father," and the fourth words, the words born of deep spiritual anguish at the climax of His suffering, began with "My God." That arrangement is not accidental, but very significant. The relation of Jesus toward the Father made a complete revolution during these six hours. He was nailed to the cross, the king of the Jews, the Messiah of God, He suffered the tortures of hell, as the sin-bearer of the world, and He died finally, as the loving Son of the Father, who had redeemed fallen mankind. Indeed a wonder!



With the death of Jesus it seemed as if all of nature convulsed. The earth quaked and the rocks were torn from their bases. The very tombs of the saints, buried round about Jerusalem, were opened up. Some of these saints arose with their resurrected Lord on Easter morn and appeared in the city of Jerusalem.<sup>43)</sup> Even the great drapery, hanging before the Holy of Holies in the temple, was rent from top to bottom. Great, indeed, were the signs that accompanied the death of Jesus.

As varied as the signs themselves were, so numerous have been the attempted explanations. Yet the whole matter centers on this point. If Jesus were but a mere man, why should such marvelous things happen? We should be mystified. But if this man was the Son of God, we have the explanation. For these phenomena would be very insignificant in the face of the fact that God's Son died. The question is not, therefore, Can we believe in these miracles? The question is, Can we believe that this man was the Son of God? Our answer to the latter will condition our answer to the former question. We do accept these miracles as true, for we agree with the centurion, traditionally named Longinus, who, after he had watched the entire proceedings from the very outset that morning, exclaimed, "Truly, this man was the Son of God!"<sup>44)</sup> Even the very people

---

39) Mt. 27, 49.    40) Jn. 19, 30.    41) Lk. 2, 14.    42) Lk. 23, 46.

43) It is novel to see how D. Strauss "explains" this miracle. "It has already been mentioned above, that the accounts of raising the dead in our Gospels are nothing but pledges given to itself by the faith of the Christendom of the earliest period, that Jesus, not having performed in his lifetime the Messianic raising of the dead, will so much the more certainly perform it on his second coming. Attention was also drawn to the disproportion between the guarantee and that for which it was to be the guarantee -- a disproportion consisting in the fact that the dead raised by Jesus during his life on earth had returned only to earthly life, to die a second time, while under the Messianic Resurrection the dead were to be raised in glorified bodies to immortal life; added to which was the small number of those isolated Evangelical cases



who had stood about the cross to revel in the torments of the man whom they hated returned to Jerusalem, while they smote their breasts because of the wonders which they had beheld. They too were impressed!

The women, it seems, had withdrawn from the group directly beneath the cross to watch the last scenes from a distance. From the names given by the first three evangelists and from the fact that St. John does not speak of this change of position by the women it appears as if this disciple had taken the mother Mary back to the city before the end came, probably right after Jesus had commended her into the disciple's care. At this time, though, we still find Mary, the sister of the Virgin, the mother of James and Joses, Mary Magdalene, who had been joined by Salome, the mother of James and John, and other women at Golgotha. These women had followed Jesus on His many missionary journeys all the way from northern Galilee. Now they were beholding His last hours. It was they, also, who would be the first to hear the glorious Easter tidings, "He is risen, He is risen indeed." Great was their reward for their faithful service!

As they watched these last events, they must have noticed, all at once, that a messenger came from the city and gave an order to the soldiers, guarding the crosses. This messenger had been dispatched by

---

of Resurrection which was quite incommensurate with the number of those for whom they were to answer. To compensate for this double deficiency, a case was desirable in which a larger number of dead, and these not men liable to die a second time, but as risen saints, should have come forth out of their graves." (op. cit., p. 385.)

44) St. Mark quotes the same words as St. Matthew. St. Luke gives the same meaning with his, "Certainly this man was righteous!" (23, 47.)



Pilate, for the Jews had requested the Procurator that the three convicted men might not remain on the crosses over the coming Sabbath, which would be a high festival day, for it was the Sabbath in the Feast and also the day on which the first fruits of the harvest were brought in. Pilate granted the request and commanded that the legs of the men should be broken. This envoy had just brought that message. Complying with these orders the soldiers first broke the legs of the two criminals, but when they came to Jesus, they saw that life had already departed. They did not then break His legs, but one of the soldiers, just to make sure, thrust a spear into Jesus' side and out poured blood and water. These last duties of the soldiers seem to have been witnessed by St. John, for he describes them in exact detail and asserts, "And he who saw this, bore witness, and his witness is true, and this one knows that he speaks the truth, in order that you also might believe." <sup>45)</sup>

Just what did this blood and water signify? The imaginations of many have run rampant and they have seen in these two liquids the water of baptism and the blood of the eucharist or the water of life and the blood of atonement. But all that seems too symbolic. Ylvisaker maintains that "this is a miracle." <sup>46)</sup> Yet it seems more correct to say that the purpose for reporting this incident is to assure the readers of all time that Jesus was truly dead. The fact that blood and water exuded from the wound proved ~~the~~ the soldiers' contention. Jesus was actually dead. That is the reason why St. John included this scene in his account. He wanted to show us also that Jesus was really dead.

The fourth evangelist also points out that two Bible passages

---

45) Jn. 19, 35.

46) Ylvisaker, J., op. cit., p. 753.



find their fulfillment in these last acts of the soldiers. The other two men had to suffer added pains and tortures by having their legs broken, but Jesus was spared this ordeal, as it was prophesied in regard to the Passover lamb, "They shall leave none of it unto the morning, nor break any bone of it." 47) In the piercing of the side St. John heard the words of Zechariah, "And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced." 48)

Now that Jesus had died, all that remained was His burial. If Jesus had been buried according to custom, His would have been an ignominious grave. 49) But in this case the Romans had charge of the execution, hence we can surmise that they would lay down the order. Therefore it was possible for Joseph of Arimathaea, a member of the Sanhedrin and a secret disciple of Jesus, to ask Pilate for the body of Jesus for a more decent burial. 50)

The Roman Procurator, however, marvelled that Jesus was already dead. Probably there had been no time as yet for carrying out the order of the breaking of the legs. But after checking with the centurion, who, it seems, had returned to headquarters by that time, he permitted Joseph to remove the corpse. Joseph was then joined by Nicodemus, another member of the Jewish Sanhedrin and a secret disciple of Jesus, 51)

---

47) Num. 9, 12.

48) Zechariah 12, 10.

49) "In one point alone is the Burial of our Lord an unreconcilable contradiction to Jewish traditional Law. Criminals had to be buried in special burying-places of the court of justice, and not in family graves; the beheaded and the strangled by themselves, and the stoned and burned also by themselves." (Dalman, G., op. cit., p. 105.)

50) "According to Roman custom, the corpse of an executed criminal belongs to the relatives or friends." (Ludwig, E., op. cit., p. 313.)



who brought along a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes for embalming the body. The two then carefully removed the body and wrapped it in a linen cloth, which Joseph had procured for the burial. They then hastily carried Jesus away and laid Him in Joseph's new tomb, which was located in a garden near the hill of execution. This location was probably intended to be temporary, but under the press of circumstances, it being the evening before the Sabbath, which began at six o'clock, they had to dispose of the body as quickly as possible, lest they be made ceremonially unclean by handling a dead body after the Sabbath had officially begun.

Two women were still watching the last rites being performed over the body of their departed friend. They were Mary Magdalene and Mary, the sister of the Virgin. As soon as they had seen just what had been done with the body of Jesus, they hurried back into the city and prepared some few spices and ointment, which they had at hand, for anointing the body, before the Sabbath would overtake them.

On the Sabbath all was still. Jesus' body lay quietly in the new hewn sepulcher of Joseph of Arimathaea.

At Saturday evening, six o'clock, the Sabbath restrictions were lifted. Immediately there were people astir in both camps. The women, who had followed Jesus, began preparing more spices and ointments for further embalming of the body. After the stores and shops were once more opened, they added to the supply which they had gathered on Friday

---

51) Because of these two men we have favored the Small Sanhedrin and not the Great Sanhedrin at the trial of Jesus. We can be sure that they were not present the night on which Jesus was tried, for they certainly would not have voted for His death, yet we are told that of those men present at the trial "all condemned Him." (Mk. 14, 64.)



evening. Now they were all ready to visit the tomb at the first rays of the sun on Easter morning, so that they might finish the task, so hastily carried out by the men, late Friday afternoon.

The chief priests and the Pharisees, however, came together for a different purpose. They hurried to Pilate and said, "Lord, we remember that this deceiver said while living, 'After three days I will arise!' Command that the tomb be made safe until the third day, lest His disciples come, steal Him, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead!' And the last mistake will be greater than the first." When Pilate heard their wish, he commanded, "Take a watch! Go away and make it as sure as you can." 52) The Jews did just this. They sealed the stone which covered the entrance to the tomb and stationed some Roman soldiers there, as a guard. How many soldiers were in this guard it is hard to judge. There probably were not more than four, one for each watch of the night.

Here the Passion of Jesus ends. And though often through the trial and suffering of Jesus, there appear flashes of His godhead, yet for the most part we must and do say that here Jesus reached the depths of His humiliation. Now that He lay in the grave, this humiliation was complete. "To say that He was buried is the most unambiguous way in which it is possible to stamp a being as a true actual man. . . . Therefore what gives the sepultus est its place in the Christian creed is decidedly that it speaks of an act of God and indeed -- it can scarcely be expressed otherwise -- of a self-surrender of God to the state and

---

52) This account is given only by St. Matthew. (27, 63 - 65.)



fate of man, a self-surrender in which He does not cease to be God, but yet makes the state and fate of man His own in such a way that His divine existence for all other eyes than His own becomes absolutely invisible." 53)

Hence, such a Jesus, though essential to Christianity, was no the founder of Christianity, as some would have it. 54) It could only be a revitalized Jesus, the glorified Christ of Easter morn, who could be the founder and hero and Savior of a living, vital religion. It is the cry of the Easter tide, "Christ is risen from the grave!" that brought the world to the feet of the crucified Savior. So it is not with sad hearts that we close this chapter, for we know that but three days hence the grave no longer held its captive. He, who had entered death willingly for all mankind, could also leave it willingly for all mankind!

---

53) Barth, Karl, op. cit., pp. 85. 87.

54) "And so the burial ended. Here ends the life of Jesus, and here begins the history of Christianity." (Klausner, J., op. cit., p. 355.)



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### INTRODUCTION:

#### Conservative:

Cartledge, Samuel, A Conservative Introduction to the New Testament, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1939.

Farrar, F.W., The Messages of the Books, The MacMillan, Co., New York, 1927.

Rimmer, Harry, The New Testament and the Laws of Evidence, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., 1938.

Rimmer, Harry, Voices from the Silent Centuries, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., 1937.

#### Critical:

Brandes, Georg Morris Cohen, Jesus a Myth, translated from the Danish by Edwin Bjorkman, Albert and Charles Boni, New York, 1926.

Carpenter, J. Estlin, The Jesus of the Gospels and the Jesus of History, American Unitarian Association, Boston, Mass., 1938.

Conybeare, Fred C., The Historical Christ, The Open Court Publishing Co., Chicago, Ill., 1914.

Glover, T.R., The Jesus of History, Harper and Brothers, Publishers, New York, 1917.

Jaynes, Julian C., The Place of Jesus in the Religion of Today, American Unitarian Association, Boston, Mass., 1937.

Moore, Addison, A New Attitude Toward Jesus, American Unitarian Association, Boston, Mass., 1931.

Paine, Thomas, The Age of Reason, The Pioneer Press, London, 1937.

### BIOGRAPHY:

#### Conservative:

Arndt, Wm., Mimeographed Notes on the Life of Christ, as given in his course at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., 1940.



Edersheim, Alfred, The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah, two volumes, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Mich., 1936.

Farrar, F.W., The Life of Christ, A.L. Burt Company, New York.

Fouard, the Abbe Constant, The Christ the Son of God, two volumes, translated from the fifth edition with the author's sanction, Longmans, Green and Co., New York, 1939.

Papini, Giovanni, Life of Christ, freely translated by Dorothy Canfield Fisher, Harcourt, Brace and Co., New York, 1923.

Reu, Michael, Mimeographed Notes on the Life of Christ, as given in his course at Wartburg Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa, 1937.

Stalker, James, The Life of Jesus Christ, Fleming H. Revell Co. New York, 1891.

Steinmeyer, F.L., The History of the Passion and Resurrection of our Lord, translated by Thomas Crerar and Alexander Cusin, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1879.

Ylvisaker, Johannes, The Gospels, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, Minn., 1932.

Critical:

Barton, George A., Jesus of Nazareth, A Biography, The MacMillan Co., New York, 1924.

Bosworth, Edward Increase, The Life and Teaching of Jesus, The MacMillan Co., New York, 1924.

Burton, Ernest DeWitt, and Mathews, Shailer, The Life of Christ, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Ill., 1924.

Case, Shirley Jackson, Jesus a New Biography, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Ill., 1927.

Dalman, Gustaf, Jesus-Jeshua, authorized translation by the Rev. Paul P. Levertoff, The MacMillan Co., New York, 1929.

Fiske, Charles, and Easton, Burton Scott, The Real Jesus, Harper and Brothers Publishers, New York, 1929.

Klausner, Joseph, Jesus of Nazareth, translated from the original Hebrew by Herbert Danby, The MacMillan Co., New York, 1926.

Ludwig, Emil, The Son of Man, translated from the German by Eden and Cedar Paul, Boni and Liveright, New York, 1928.



Neander, August, The Life of Jesus Christ, translated by John McClintock and Chas. E. Blumenthal, Harper and Brothers, Publishers, New York, 1873.

Renan, Ernest, The Life of Jesus, A.L. Burt Co., New York.

Sanday, W., Outlines of the Life of Christ, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1919.

Smith, David, The Days of His Flesh, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1917.

Strauss, David Friedrich, A New Life of Jesus, two volumes, authorized translation, Williams and Norgate, London, 1865.

#### HARMONY:

##### Gospels:

Broadus, John A., A Harmony of the Gospels, revised by Robertson, Archibald Thomas, Hodder and Stoughton and George H. Doran Co., New York, 1903.

Burton, Ernest DeWitt, and Goodspeed, Edgar Johnson, A Harmony of the Synoptic Gospels in Greek, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Ill., 1921.

Fahling, Adam, Harmony of the Gospels, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1941.

Liturgy and Agenda, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo., 1921.

Robinson, Edward, A Harmony of the Four Gospels in English, revised edition by M.B. Riddle, Houghton, Mifflin and Co., New York, 1888.

Stevens, Wm. Arnold, and Burton, Ernest DeWitt, A Harmony of the Gospels for Historical Study, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1904.

Tatian, Diatessaron, (ca. 160 A.D.) translated from the Arabic Version by the Rev. J. Hamlyn Hill, T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, 1910.

##### Bible:

Arndt, Wm., Bible Difficulties, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo., 1932.

Arndt, Wm., Does the Bible Contradict Itself? Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo., 1930.



Mitchell, H.L., One Hundred and Seventy-seven Alleged Bible Contradictions and Discrepancies, H.L. Mitchell, Publisher, New York, 1934.

#### HISTORY:

Dana, H.E., The New Testament World, Broadman Press, Nashville, Tennessee, 1937.

Qualben, Lars P., A History of the Christian Church, Thomas Nelson and Sons, New York, 1936.

Schaff, Philip, History of the Christian Church, Vol. II, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1924.

#### TRANSLATION:

Bible, Translations and Editions:

Authorized or King James Version, 1611.

Bibel, Die, translated by Dr. Martin Luther, 1522.

Bible, The, An American Translation, translated by J.M. Powis Smith and Edgar J. Goodspeed, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Ill., 1940.

Novum Testamentum Graece, edited by Dr. Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, Privilegierte Wuerttembergische Bibelanstalt, Stuttgart, 1930.

Septuaginta, edited by Alfred Rahlfs, Privilegierte Wuerttembergische Bibelanstalt, Stuttgart, 1935.

Linguistics:

Kaegi, Adolph, Short Grammar of Classical Greek, authorized English edition by James A. Kleist, B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis, Mo., 1932.

Liddell and Scott, Greek-English Lexicon, An Intermediate, founded on the seventh edition, American Book Co., New York.

Thayer, Joseph Henry, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, American Book Co., New York, 1809.

Young, Robert, Analytical Concordance to the Bible, American Book Exchange, New York, 1881.



INTERPRETATION:

- Baron, David, The Servant of Jehovah, Morgan and Scott, Ltd., London, 1922.
- Jamieson, R., Fausset, A.R., and Brown, D., A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Mich., 1934.
- Kretzmann, P.E., Popular Commentary of the Bible, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo., 1921.
- Meyer, H.A.W., Kommentar ueber das Neue Testament, Vanden Loeck und Ruprecht's Verlag, Goettingen, 1883.
- Stoeckhardt, G., Die biblische Geschichte des Neuen Testaments, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo., 1906.

SOURCE MATERIAL:

- Apocryphal Books of the New Testament, The, translated from the original tongues by David McKay, Publisher, Philadelphia, Penna., 1901
- Apostolic Fathers, The, "Didache," Vol. I, edited by Kirsopp Lake, William Heinemann, London, G.P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1919.
- Babylonian Talmud, "Tract Sanhedrin," Vols. VII & VIII, edited and translated into English by Michael L. Rodkinson, The Talmud Society, Boston, Mass., 1918.
- Eusebius, Kirchen-Geschichte, aus dem Griechischen uebersetzt von F.U. Stroth, Verlag von L. Volkening, St. Louis, Mo., 1904.
- Josephus, Flavius, Complete Works, translated by Wm. Whiston, John E. Potter & Co., Ltd., Philadelphia, Penna.
- Josephus, Flavius, Opera Omnia, edited by C. E. Richter, E. B. Schwickert, Leipzig, 1826.
- Tacitus, The Annals, E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York, 1937.

ENCYCLOPEDIAS:

- Catholic Encyclopedia, The, Vol. V., Robert Appleton Co., New York, 1909.
- Jewish Encyclopedia, The, Vol. IX, Funk and Wagnalls Co., New York, 1907.
- Standard American Encyclopedia, The, fifteen volumes, Standard American Corporation, Chicago, Ill., 1937.



MISCELLANEOUS:

Barth, Karl, Credo, translated by J. Strathearn McNab, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1937.

Bowen, Clayton R., "Comments on the Fourth Gospel," Anglican Theological Review, Vol. XII, No. 3, Jan., 1930, pp. 225 - 238.

Davis, John D., A Dictionary of the Bible, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, Penna., 1936.

Link, Kurt, De Antiquissimis Veterum Quae ad Jesum Nazarenum Spectant Testimoniis, Verlag von Alfred Toepelmann, Giessen, 1913.

Ronayne, Edmond, The Master's Carpet, Ezra A. Cook, Publisher, Chicago, Ill., 1917.

Stoeckhardt, G., Passionspredigten, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo.

Wigmore, John H., A Students' Textbook of the Law of Evidence, The Foundation Press, Inc., Chicago, Ill., 1935.

ADDENDA:

BIOGRAPHY:

Conservative:

Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, "Harmony of the Gospels," A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, edited by Philip Schaff, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, Vol. VI, 1903.

Sheen, Fulton J., The Eternal Galilean, D. Appleton-Century Co., New York, 1934.